

Baghawad Gita, Class 173: Chapter 13, Verses 15 to 17

Note: In this chapter the numbering of shlokas can be different depending upon Gita book you are reading. I am using Swamiji's numbering.

Shloka # 15:

**Shining through the functions of all the organs,
(yet) devoid of all the organs; unattached, and verily the
supporter of all;
without ality, and the perceiver of alities;**

Arjuna

in this 13th Chapter had asked Sri Krishna for clarification on the six technical terms used; they were: Kshetram, Kshetragna, Gyanam, Gneyam, Prakrti and Purushah. Sri Krishna is explaining them one by one. He has explained three of them beginning with Kshetram; now he is explaining the meaning of the fourth topic that is known as Gneyam. Gneyam means Param Brahman. Gneyam is used to convey the meaning that it is the ultimate truth knowing which one gets liberated. Such a Brahman is being explained in shlokas 15-19. Sri Krishna is revealing Brahman as pure existence. Existence and Consciousness are two words that have very different meanings. According to Vedanta, Existence is a unique thing and everything that describes Consciousness extends to Existence as well.

Consciousness is not a part, product, or property of matter.

Consciousness is an independent entity, which pervades and enlivens matter. Consciousness goes beyond the dimensions of matter or the body. Then, I said, consciousness survives even when the body is destroyed. And fifthly and finally I said that the surviving consciousness is not recognizable, not because it is not there, but because there is no body-medium for manifesting it. Just as if you do not see light in this point, not because light is absent here; but it is because there is no manifesting medium. The moment I keep the hand here, the light which was not manifest before, becomes manifest through the hand. Therefore hand is not producer of light, but hand is the medium, which manifests the light. Similarly, the surviving consciousness cannot be recognized because the manifesting medium is not there.

All

these five principles regarding the consciousness must be extended to the existence

principle also. Existence is with capital E, because according to Vedanta, existence

is the same as consciousness. And therefore all the five principles applicable

to consciousness will have to extend to existence as well.

What are the five

principles? If we enumerate the principles, assimilation will take lot of time.

The

five principles are:

1. Existence is not part, product or property of body or an object.
2. Existence is an independent entity. It is the ultimate substance that pervades the body, and makes the body existent. Existence pervades the body and makes the body

existent.

3. This existence extends beyond my body and is not limited by boundary of body. This existence, which pervades the body, extends beyond the periphery or the dimensions of the body; just as the light that falls on my body is not on my body alone, the light extends beyond my body; similarly, existence is not limited by the boundaries of the body.
4. This existence survives even after death of body. Just as the light that falls on the body will survive even if remove my hand. That is why in space travel, when they go beyond our atmosphere, you will have eternal darkness. There is no day night division at all. We are able to have day upon the earth because the earth has an atmosphere, which is capable of reflecting the sunlight; that is why we see the blue canopy. Blue canopy is nothing but sunlight's blue-color scattered by dust particle. It is dust particle, scattering the blue color of the sunlight. You go beyond the atmosphere where the dust particle is not there to reflect, what you will experience is eternal darkness. Even when you see the Sun, between the Sun and you, in space travel, there is no nothing, no atmosphere, only darkness. So Vedanta says the existence survives even after the fall of the body.
5. Surviving existence is not recognizable, as a manifesting media is not there.

That

existence consciousness is the Brahman and that Brahman, O Arjuna are you. Tat

Tvam Asi.

So

you have to travel a lot. First you have to conceive a pure existence. Then appreciate

it as pure consciousness. Then you should claim that the pure

existence consciousness
is I, myself. This is tat tvam asi. It is not an easy topic.
And therefore Sri Krishna
adopts a method, which is used in Vedanta. What is the method?
Say, I want to
show you or teach you what is the light. But I am not able to
show you the pure
light, because light without medium cannot be demonstrated.
So, what should I
do? I put my hand here. What do I want to teach? Not about
hand but about
light.

Therefore
I introduce my hand and ask what do you see? You will say only
hand. Then I
have to tell you that that it is not the hand alone, there is
something other
than the hand, and because of that alone you are able to see
the hand, etc; if
I say so for half an hour, you will say that there are two
things; hand and the
pervading light. There, afterwards, I have to tell you, please
focus your
attention on the light and forget the hand; So I introduce the
hand, through
the hand introduce the light, and thereafter quietly withdraw
the hand and then
I tell you that, in that place, where the hand was, there
continues the
formless light principle and what is that formless light
principle; it is that
because of which the hand is recognized. **So
introduce the hand, introduce the light; remove the hand and
reveal the pure
light.**

This method of

teaching is adhyaropa-apavada nyaya. Introducing the hand is called adhyaropa

and after revealing the light, removal of the hand is called apavada. In fact, this

we do all the time. Suppose I ask you, please get me some water, and then you went

and brought me a cup of water; and I get angry with you as guru; I have a privilege

to get angry. Therefore I tell: What did I ask? Water; I never asked you to bring

the cup. Why did you bring the cup? Then what will the Shishya think? I thought

Guru is sane; but he seems to have some problem. How can I bring water alone;

water requires a container to communicate/transfer. And therefore, for the sake

of communication/transaction/transference, we keep the container; so that

shishya brings water with the container, I also take the water with the

container, then when I drink, what do I do? The shishya knows, the guru knows, the cup is

only used for transferring the water; I take the water part and leave the

container. Similarly, pure existence can never be understood. So you introduce

an object and appreciate the object plus existence and having gathered the

knowledge of existence; what do you do, you remove the container and container

is the object, nama rupa. Mike IS;

Minus mike is, IS. Table IS. Minus table is what: IS.

Therefore, understand

existence with the world, adhyaropa; and then

retaining the existence, remove/dismiss the world, it is called apavada. And this

method Sri Krishna is using here. This existence is all the time appreciated by you through all the sense organs. The existence is manifest and is recognized through every sensory operation. Just as light is recognized, when I see the clip.

At the same time, the existence or Brahman is free from all the sense organs or objects. It means that sense organs are not the intrinsic nature of Brahman. Light is Illuminating the hand; and because of the hand, light is visible to us. But you know that the hand is not an intrinsic part of the light. Light is not the intrinsic part of the hand as well. If hand were intrinsic part of light, what will happen? Wherever light is there, there will be hand.

Thus

you appreciate existence through the mike, but mike is not intrinsic part of Brahman.

Thus you appreciate existence through the world but the world itself is not an intrinsic part of Brahman. Therefore Brahman is world-free and free from all the sense organs.

This existence Brahman accommodates and supports everything. It is sarvadharam. How do you know that; because of that alone, everything is existent. Every object enjoys existence only because of Brahman, just as gold alone lends existence to all ornaments. Brahman alone is sarvadharam.

Brahman is free from all the objects of the World; that means those objects are not innate part of Brahman. Asaktam means like akasha. Akasha supports everything but nothing is an intrinsic part of it. So everytime you take water with the glass, it is adhyaropa, and when you leave the glass after drinking the water, it is apavada.

Then Gunabhoktr means it is associated with all the properties; how do you know; because you say, every property IS. That IS represents association. Green color IS. ISness is associated with the property.

Now, the properties are not the intrinsic nature of Brahman. So the nearest example you can have is the screen and the movie. All the movie objects are associated with the screen, at the same time, screen is free from all those movie objects. If it is the movie Towering Inferno; the fire in the movie is associated with the screen, but the screen is not affected by the fire; that is why at the end of the movie, screen is still present; as far as screen is concerned, there is no fire; and suppose you see the movie Titanic; the ship sinking scene is throughout the movie, water you have seen on the screen; and at the end of every show, but you still have a dry screen. No, the wettest movie will not make the screen wet; the dry screen continues to be driest, even when you have water. Similarly, Brahman accommodates all, but from Brahman's standpoint, they are not there, intrinsically. So nirgunam. That Brahman is said to be nirgunam

Shloka # 16:

Existing outside and inside all beings; moving as well as non-moving, It is incomprehensible due to subtleness. So also, It is far away, and yet near.

So the existence consciousness Brahman is not only in the Body, but it is outside it as well. It is both within and without. Remember the example, light is upon the hand also, light is beyond the hand as well. Then the question will come; how come I see the light only on the hand; what answer will you say. That is because of reflecting medium; upon the hand, light is manifest light; in Sanskrit, it is vyaktha prakasha, beyond the hand, the light exists, but in what form; in unmanifest form; In Sanskrit, Avyaktha prakasha. Wherever

people are sitting, it is vyaktha prakasha. In this fan in vyatha prakasham, in that fan, vyaktha prakasham, in between the two fans, it is avyaktha prakasha. I am talking about the light, the prakasha is, but in what form; unmanifest, but if you put any object in between it will become vyaktham.

Similarly, the Upanishad says Consciousness is in this body; consciousness is in the other body. Between the two bodies too, consciousness IS. Similarly existence is here, there and in between as well. In fact, even when you say, nothing is; Nothing IS; there also you are talking about Is. You can never think of the absence of existence anywhere. Even when you talk about total blankness, what will you say, there is blankness; there also IS.

And because this concept is very subtle, instead of using the word sat, chit, etc. we use the word Rama, Krishna, Narayana etc. These we can conceive and appreciate because there is form. We do not question ourselves, if Narayana is with shanka, chakra, etc.

If Narayana has to be both inside and outside, he has to be formless existence alone. You can never think of an all-Pervading Narayana, unless you can think of pure existence. And, therefore, bahirantasca bhutanam. Bhutani means all living beings.

And
acaram carameva ca. It is
moving and it is non-moving. So it is moving and it is non-moving. How to
understand this? If it is moving, it cannot be nonmoving.

Both
are diagonally opposite. How do you say it is both? The answer is: It is really
non-moving; but it is seemingly moving when the medium moves and it is the

medium, which manifests. Let us take the example itself. The all-pervading light does not move at all. Light is all over the hall. It does not move. It cannot move as well. But what happens? When I keep the hand here, you are able to see the light here and imagine I am moving the hand; the visible light has come to this point now. Again I move to another place, the visible light has moved to that point. As the medium, the reflecting medium moves, it appears as though the light is also moving. This is an aberration; there is a seeming feeling of movement, exactly like when we are coming to Madras, after a vacation by train; what do you say: Madras has come. You are travelling by train; You have crossed Bassein Bridge and when the Madras station comes, you jump to the platform and say at last Madras has come. Does Madras come and go. It does not come. The arrival of the train, the movement of the train is falsely transferred to the place Madras. The movement of the earth is transferred to the Sun. Even in the newspaper you see, Sunrise 6.15, sunset 6.45, etc. You know the Sun never rises or sets. It is stationary.

What is happening? The attribute of one thing is transferred to the other. Similarly what do we do; the movement of the hand is falsely transferred to the light and therefore the light appears to be moving. You would have seen the Lighthouse

from the beach. I always thought that there are three lights; powerful lights are kept; spot light or something; thus we see three beams moving or rotating.

I thought that there are 3 lights that are moving. But, I read in a book, and it says: three lights are not there; there is only light. And not only that, that one light too, does not move. So there is one non-moving light; but what is my experience. Ekam is becoming anekam; achalam is becoming chalam. So I read later that there is only one motionless powerful light in the middle and there is a device around the light; and that device has three holes; and that device is moving.

And therefore what do we do; the motion and the number belonging to the device we falsely transfer to the light. All these topics are very elaborately discussed in Vedanta. This is called dharma adhyasa. Property of one transferred to other. When we feel gloomy, we say today was a gloomy day. Day is the same. Something is bad with me, so I say the day is gloomy. Black day, etc. Day is neither black, nor white nor gloomy. Whatever I feel, I transfer and ascribe it to the day. Similarly the Upanishads say that the body travels; the mind travels, the jivarsis travel; but the consciousness, the Existence does not travel. But it seems to travel along with the medium. Therefore acharam means motionless and charam means seemingly moving, because of the transference of the property.

And

durastham chantike ca tat; second line, last portion. That Brahman is far away. Durastham means far away. Then we will decide; we

have to start because it is far away and that too Vaikuntha, so much distance is there; And not only they say it is far away, they say, if you take two steps forward, Bhagavan will take four steps towards you. All these they tell when they talk about Bhakthi and we also enjoy it. Five feet we take and Karunamurthy takes ten feet and tears roll down our eyes on the compassion of the Lord, etc. It is all OK, as long as, you do not use your Buddhi. If Bhagavan has to come near me by travelling, that Bhagavan cannot be all pervading. Daily we would be saying also Ananthaya Nama, Ananthaya Nama, etc. In one place, one direction, we say that Bhagavan is all pervading; and at the same time, we thoughtlessly say that Bhagavan will take 10 steps when you take two steps towards him.

Therefore durastham, we have a wrong concept that Bhagavan is far away and therefore Sri Krishna says that antike ca tat. When you say Bhagavan is far away. how should you understand it? Whenever anyone says that Bhagavan is in Vaikuntha, what should you say is, Bhagavan is in vaikuntha also. Bhagavan is in Kailasa also. That also means what: he is in vaikuntha also, kailasam also, bhulokha also, Adayar also, Vidya Mandir also, the lecture hall also; and he is also in the mat in which I am sitting; which means that He is in your heart also. So durastham cantike ca tat. Brahman is far and near; in short Brahman is everywhere.

Shankaracharya gives another interpretation. For a wise person, Brahman is nearest, because he knows that Brahman is not away from me. For an ignorant person, Brahman is far away;

because he continues his search; going on and on and on. So for an ignorant person, it is far away. For a wise person, Brahman is nearest, nearest is not the word; He is one with me.

Then

comes the final question. If Brahman is everywhere, how come I do not recognize that Brahman?

Sri Krishna answers: Sukshmatvat; Even though Brahman is everywhere it is of the subtlest nature, which means that it is free from attributes; attributes alone help me recognize things. When an object produces a sound, I can recognize through the ears; if the object has got a touch, I can recognize through the skin. If it has got form or color, I can recognize through the eyes. Attribute alone helps me recognize.

And Brahman is sukshmam; meaning one without attributes; and therefore, avijneyam, extremely difficult to comprehend. Lesser the attributes, more incomprehensible a thing becomes; More the attributes; the easier to understand. And that is why when you take the pancha bhutani; akasha, vayu, agni, jalam, prithvi, you will find that prithivi, the earth is the grossest thing you can recognize, because it can be recognized through shabda, sparsha, rupa, rasa and gandha. All the five are there; When you come to water, it has got only four attributes; shabda, sparsha, rupa, rasa. Water does not have smell.

So, water is Smell-less. Only four attributes; therefore it can be recognized only through four sense organs. Agni has three attributes: shabda, sparsha, rupa. Agni does not have taste. If you have doubt, taste it. You do not have to taste Agni; taste over heated coffee. You cannot taste anything for an hour later. Agni has got three elements and three attributes can be recognized through the sense organs.

Vayu has become still subtler. It has got only shabda and sparsha. That is sound and touch; no form. If you want to teach what is air to a child, you will have a tough time.

And when you come to akasha, it does not have rupa, rasa, gandha, all these things; akasha is supposed to have only shabda, means the echoing capacity. And that is why akasha has only one property and therefore it is very difficult understand.

Even now science does not know what is space. They are coming up with various theories, sometimes they had the theory of ether; sometimes that it is emptiness,

Now they say it is a positive thing; particle just comes out of space that means it is not an empty space. Space is a positive matter. Einstein says: space is a curved elastic matter. We are not able to conceive of it at all. Because the lesser the properties, the subtler the thing, and we say Brahman is subtler than even akasha.

Therefore comprehending Brahman is going to be the toughest job. And, therefore, Sri Krishna says, if you do not understand, it is not your mistake; it is the mistake

of Brahman. Why should Brahman come like that? Can't He have come and jump in front of us. The problem is with Brahman.! Sukshmatvat tat avijneyam.

It is difficult to comprehend. This is Gneyam.

Shloka # 17:

And the Knowable, though undivided, appears to be existing as divided in all beings, and It is the sustainer of all beings as also the devourer and originator.

So that Brahman is indivisible, like space which cannot be divided; that Brahman, the pure existence-consciousness, is vibhaktam; na vibhaktam; vibhaktam means division, it is indivisible. Therefore he says. avibhaktam, it is undivided and at the same time, bhutesu vibhaktham iva sthitham. It is seemingly divided. It is really undivided but it is seemingly divided, Why is it seemingly divided; Consciousness is all pervading, but we experience consciousness only where the body-medium is available. So therefore, 'here' consciousness can be recognized, in another living being consciousness can be recognized, but in between them the consciousness is not recognizable. Therefore what will be our conclusion; it will be, there is one consciousness here and there is another consciousness there; And therefore how many consciousness's are there; So many;

Therefore there is a seeming division, but the fact is consciousness is in between as well, in an unrecognizable form, but wherever body is, it is recognized. You can see the light; here one, there one, but in between there is no light. We therefore might commit a mistake that the light is also two. But what is the real understanding?

Divisions belong to the fingers but the division does not belong to the light. Here there is visible light; between the fingers, there is invisible light. Therefore, light is continuously there; in pockets visible; in pockets not visible.

And therefore, he says, it is seemingly divided. Again remember the lighthouse example. There is only one light; but it seems to be three lights.

And such a Brahman is Jagat Srishti laya karanam. Out of that pure Brahman alone, all names and forms of the universe have originated and they exist and they dissolve into that Brahman. Out of that Brahman alone all the nama rupa has come.

And that Brahman is Jagat Srishti Sthiti Laya Karanam. Everything dissolves into that Brahman. Brahman is sthiti karanam.

Take away:

So introduce the hand, introduce the light; remove the hand and reveal the pure light. This method of teaching is adhyaropa-apavada **nyaya**.

Thus you appreciate existence through the world but the world

itself is not an
intrinsic part of Brahman. Therefore Brahman is world-free and
free from all
the sense organs.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Baghawad Gita, Class 172: Chapter 13, Verses 13 to 15

Note: In this chapter
the numbering of shlokas can be different depending upon Gita
book you are
reading. I am using Swamiji's numbering.

Shloka # 13:

**I shall speak of that which is to be known, by
realizing which one attains Immortality. The supreme Brahman
is without any
beginning. That is called neither being nor non-being.**

From
shloka # 13 onwards Sri Krishna is discussing the fourth topic
of Gneyam.

Gneyam
means that which is to be known by everyone; the ultimate
truth, without this
knowledge one can't obtain immortality. So, every human being
must have this
knowledge that is also known as Param Brahman. And every human

being wants to conquer mortality, and therefore every human being should necessarily gain this knowledge. This Param Brahman is discussed in all Upanishads and that knowledge is called Brahma Vidya. Now Sri Krishna wants to give us the essence of Upanishads in shlokas # 13-19; it is the Upanishad Sara or Brahma vidya.

Shloka # 14:

That (Knowable), which has hands and feet everywhere, which has eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, which has ears everywhere, exists in creatures by pervading them all.

In Upanishads, Brahman is revealed as ultimate substance out of which Universe is made of.

It is the ultimate content of universe. Science is also trying to find this substance. Once they said 100 elements made up the universe; then they tried to find out content of elements and found molecules; digging further they found molecules were made of invisible atoms in motion. While atoms are invisible, together, they create this tangible universe. Digging down further they found even atoms were made of sub-atomic particles.

Then the particles also, they tried to divide further, and they said energy, the intangible energy is the ultimate stuff of the universe. Thus they are going deeper and deeper, and

their aim is what, to find out, what is the basic, ultimate substance. And the interesting thing that we see is **as you go deeper and deeper, the visible becomes the invisible. The tangible becomes the intangible. The concrete becomes the abstract. Therefore we come to know that the ultimate substance must be intangible, formless and abstract substance.** And what is that final abstract substance, the scientists have not yet arrived at; they are still in the process of enquiry.

Vedanta has analyzed the same subject matter and Vedanta has arrived at the ultimate substance and Vedanta calls it Brahman. Brahman is the basic substance of this creation, and the being the ultimate substance, it is going to be abstract, it is going to be intangible; it is going to be invisible; it is ashabdham, asparsham, arupam, arasam and avyayam. And, therefore, understanding that Brahman is going to be a relatively tougher prospect. So we are going to analyze a substance, which is not available for seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and therefore this portion are going to be abstract. Therefore, it looks like a jumble of words because we try to concretely conceive of something, but we are not discussing a concrete and tangible thing. But still if you go on dwelling upon this teaching, slowly, the words will begin to make sense but it requires lot of intellectual acclimatization.

So to understand Brahman, it requires certain Acclimatization, therefore, for new students, this topic will look like a bunch of words, but do not be disappointed, but slowly if you dwell on, it will make sense.

How

should we approach this topic? Normally, we have seen a lot of substances in the world. So when we see a person, you qualify him/her as tall, lean, fat, fair etc.

We use a noun and an adjective. An adjective generally refers to a property like tall, short, fat, fair, round and in English, adjective, refers to properties of an object. And generally, the noun, like the tall tree, the fat man etc.; refer to substance. Adjectives reveal properties and attributes, while nouns reveal substances. This is where we have to begin. Adjectives reveal properties and nouns reveal substances; this is one thing we generally experience.

Now

there is another experience we have, which also we have to notice. When I say a fat man, a tall tree, a round object, etc.; this is what I experience. Now I will give you another set of words; I say there is a golden bangle; there is a wooden chair. When I say Golden bangle, golden is adjective; and bangle is the noun. And when I say wooden chair, wooden is adjective; chair is noun.

Now in this particular case, when I say golden bangle, the word golden does not refer to a property, even though the word is an adjective; here in this unique and peculiar case, the word golden refers to the very substance of the bangle. So, Golden refers to the substance gold and not a property. And when I say a wooden chair, the word wooden is an adjective, but it still is not referring to a property; the word wooden here means the substance is nothing but wood.

And therefore in this particular case, adjective reveals a substance and not a property. Whereas, **when I say a tall person, adjective reveals a property, tallness. but when I say golden bangle, adjective reveals a substance.** Therefore rule No.1, I want to convey is that: an Adjective can reveal either a property or a substance. Both possibilities are there.

Similarly, when I say golden bangle, the word bangle is a

noun. But even though the word bangle is a noun, really speaking, it does not reveal a substance at all; because there is no substance called bangle, there is only the substance called gold; bangle is a noun, but still it does not reveal a substance. If bangle is not a substance, then what does it reveal? If you analyze, Gold when it is in a particular form or shape, that shape alone is called bangle. Similarly when you say golden ring, there is no substance called ring; ring is the name of a particular shape. Similarly when you say wooden chair, there is no substance called chair; chair is the name of a particular shape alone.

Here

the name of the substance is wood alone. Similarly, bangle is a form; chain is a form, ring is a form.

So we have two examples, in example No.1, tall tree; adjective reveals property; Noun reveals substance. When I say golden bangle, adjective reveals the substance; the word bangle reveals not a substance but a particular form. That is why when form is changed, bangle is gone. Therefore the word bangle refers to the property. And therefore **Vedanta says adjectives can reveal either a property of a substance. Similarly, nouns can also reveal either a property or a substance.** Should I remind you of the four examples:

Adjective

reveals property such as Tall, fat etc.

Adjective

reveals the substance such as golden, wooden etc.

What

is the example for noun revealing the substance? Tree.

What

is the example for noun revealing the property? Bangle.

Now Vedanta comes to this world. All this is only example. Now only we are coming to the original. When I experience a world, I say here is a book, and here is a fan; and there is a wall; there is a man; there is a woman. So when I experience the world, I refer to everyone as there is a man; there is a woman, there is a table, there is a chair. What is common to all of them: It is, It is, It is, and the verb "IS" refers to the existence of the world. When I say there is a clock, it means clock is existent. When I say there is a planet, the planet is existent. Therefore, every object that I experience is existent such as: existent tree, existent man, existent woman. Whatever I experience is, existent, existent, existent. If anything is nonexistent, then I will not experience it. Therefore everything that you experience in the world is an existent object. Everything is existent.

In

Sanskrit they say: San ghataḥ;
san phata; sat patram; san purushaha; san or sat means,
existent-object.

Now

when I say an existent tree, an existent man, an existent woman, etc. what is the
noun and what is the adjective in this?

When

I say existent-man, existent-woman, table, chair, sun, moon, stars, etc. the
word existent is adjective; and man, woman, table, chair, sun, moon, etc. are
nouns. So the word existent is adjective and every object is a noun.

Now

Vedanta asks the
question, if the word existent is an adjective, and if the word man, woman,

sun, moon, etc. are nouns, tell me what type of adjective it is and what type of noun is it? And why this question, because previously we saw, an adjective can either reveal a property or it can reveal a substance.

**Generally,
until we come to Vedanta, our general conclusion is world is the substance and the word existent is an attribute or property; this will be our general assumption.**

Vedanta, however, says that is the handiwork of maya. Maya makes you commit a very big blunder. It makes me think that the word "existent", an adjective, is revealing an attribute and the world is the substance. Vedanta says that is not correct.

According to Vedanta, the word 'existent' reveals the basic substance just as the word golden reveals the substance. It reveals a substance and the substance is called existence.

According to Vedanta, it is also called Sat Brahma. Chandoyga Upanishad begins its teaching with this topic. According to this Upanishad, the basic substance is existence and existence is not an attribute of an object, but it is the fundamental absolute substance. And being the fundamental absolute substance, it is invisible, it is intangible and it is the abstract principle.

And

therefore according to Vedanta, the whole world is not a substance at all. Just as chair is not a substance, the desk is also not a substance; thus when I am touching the desk, I am not touching the desk at all, rather I am touching the wood alone.

There is no substance called desk; no substance called table; no substance called chair. Therefore Vedanta says world is nama rupa makam.

Brihadarnyaka Upanishad says, the whole world is different names, different forms and different functions; there is no substance called world. Bangle is a name, given to a particular form, to serve a particular function. If it is a bangle name and form, what is its function? To decorate the hand; If its name is chain and what is its function; decorating the neck; if it is a ring name and form, the function is decorating the finger; there is no substance called bangle, chain, ring, etc. and the substance is gold and how many gold's are there; gold is ekam, one gold alone.

Applying this principle, **Vedanta says existence is the only basic substance, and everything else is name, form and functions.**

So when you are experiencing a bangle, you are really experiencing gold alone, which is the only substance. When you are experiencing the ring, you are experiencing the gold alone, the fundamental substance. Similarly, when you are experiencing the world, you are experiencing only one fundamental substance which is inherent in all of them. That substance is IS, IS,

IS, IS.

Shakaracharya

says all this, in a, one line shloka, when you are experiencing different ornaments you are experiencing gold. Similarly, when you are experiencing world, it is existence. That existence is Brahman. Therefore, we experience Brahman everywhere.

In

this experience I have a small difficulty. I am experiencing existence with different names and forms (tree, chair etc). Is-ness is not experienced in a pure form. Through sense organs I experience nama rupa sat. Sense organs can reveal only nama rupa.

So,

how can I experience pure existence? By filtering out nama rupa? Once you filter out nama rupa, only pure existence should be there. But if I remove nama rupa, sense organs can't experience existence.

How

to do so? Close all sense organs to remove nama rupa and let only basic substance or pure existence remain. How to experience pure existence?

Chandogya Upanishad's 6th chapter is the most well known section of the entire Upanishadic literature, because it begins with pure existence and the student is now eager to know how to experience the pure existence. The teacher says: Oh Student, you can never experience the pure existence,

because it is never an object of experience. Then the student raises his eyebrows; if I can never objectify the pure existence, how do I know it is there? Then the teacher gives the well-known statement of the Upanishad. Teacher answers, pure existence can't be objectified. It is nothing but you the Witnessing Consciousness. It is you, the Seer. Hence the saying, Tat Tvam Asi or Aham Brahma Asmi. My nature is Existence Consciousness. This is essence of Vedanta. You have to go on dwelling on this teaching that I am the ultimate substance; I am sat and I am chid; and the whole world is nama and rupa resting upon me.

When

this is said, it will be very difficult to swallow. And that is why scientists are not able to find because they are looking for the substance; but they are not going to come across the substance, why? **They are not able to come across the substance, because the searcher is the searched for object.** It is extremely difficult to swallow that I am the substance.

And to help us accept this truth; the Upanishad gives a well-known example, and that example is our dream experience. When I am dreaming, and seeing varieties of objects giving me happiness, giving me sorrow, giving me fear, what does it mean?

Dream is capable of frightening you. And imagine you are in a dream and you are seeing terrible things and in the dream a dream guru comes and tells: you do not be frightened of all these things; you are the essence of this dream world, the dream has come out of you, the dream is resting on you, on waking up the dream will resolve; if he says this in the dream, it is unbelievable. It is so realistic. But on waking up, he knows there is no dream river, dream man, dream object; none of them exist separate from me-the-waker. Vedanta tells

us that world is just another dream channel.

Now it is unbelievable; it is very difficult to accept that I am the substance, but the ultimate truth is I (not this body, because body is also part of this world only), I, the witness, sakshi chaitanyam; I am the substance of the dream world; Similarly, **during the time of our ignorance, it is unbelievable, it is difficult to** accept that I am the substance; but according to Vedanta, I am the salt of the earth. And that I is Brahman, that Brahman is existent and that existent Brahman alone appears as the world with different nama rupa. And when Brahman, the existence, the only substance, appears with different nama Rupa's, it is called Vishva rupa Ishvara. It is the name of Brahman, the existence, which is along with all the names and forms. Therefore, the one Brahman alone has become you, me, that and this, etc. This is the teaching here.

The

Shloka says: That existence pervades everything. As we used Is to describe an object. It has eye, head, face; it is everywhere with ears, it pervades surroundings, everything.

Shloka # 15:

Shining through the functions of all the organs, (yet) devoid of all the organs; unattached, and verily the supporter of all; without ality, and the perceiver of alities;

All the sense organs are revealing that Brahman all the time; for example, the eyes can reveal only colors; they cannot reveal sound; ears reveal only sound; and when I experience sound, I do not experience colors; When I experience colors, I do not experience smell; Therefore Shabda, sparsha, etc. are mutually exclusive; shabda comes sparsha is not there, rupam

comes, sparsha is not there; but all the sense organs experience one thing commonly. It is that sound IS: when you hear, sound IS: Similarly, when you use the eye, the form IS: therefore all sensory operations, uniformly reveal that Brahman alone, all sensory operations uniformly reveal that Brahman alone in the form of shabda san, sparsha san, rupam sat, etc. But the problem is you are attracted by nama rupa, and you lose sight of the inherent existence in all of them. Therefore, what should you do to experience Brahman? Sri Krishna says, you are experiencing Brahman alone every moment. When you say, shabda IS, sparsha IS, rupam IS. But because of mixture, because of mixing up of nama and rupa, we are absorbed in nama rupa and lose sight of this fundamental truth and therefore we require a sensitive and subtle intellect to appreciate that.

Take away:

As you go deeper and deeper, the visible becomes the invisible. The tangible becomes the intangible. The concrete becomes the abstract. Therefore we come to know that the ultimate substance must be intangible, formless and abstract substance.

Vedanta says

existence is the only basic substance, and everything else is name, form and functions.

Scientists

are not able to come across the substance, because the searcher is the searched for object.

During

the time of our ignorance, it is unbelievably difficult to accept that I am the substance; but according to Vedanta, I am the

salt of the earth.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Baghawad Gita, Class 171: Chapter 13, Verses 11 – 13

Greetings,

Gita, Class # 171, Ch. 13, 6/29/19

Note: In this chapter the numbering of shlokas can be different depending upon Gita book you are reading. I am using Swamiji's numbering.

Shloka # 11:

**And unwavering devotion to Me with
single-minded concentration; inclination to repair into a
clean place; lack of
delight in a crowd of people;**

Continuing his teaching

Swamiji said,

from

Shloka # 8-# 12, Sri Krishna is dealing with topic of Gyanam.

Gyanam in the

shloka means all virtues of mind that are conducive to attainment of knowledge.

Any virtue that makes mind eligible to receive spiritual knowledge is Gyanam.

Now in Shloka # 11, Bhakti or devotion to Lord is being emphasized. Only with Bhakti is Gyana yoga possible. Even Karma yoga requires bhakti, as does Upasana yoga. Thus in Ch.12 each of these yogas were named Bahkti Yoga. Thus we have:

Karma

Yoga: is Bhakti Yoga stage 1

Upasana

Yoga: is Bhakti Yoga stage 2

Gyana

yoga: is Bhakti Yoga stage 3; because Gyana yoga

also requires the background of bhakti, therefore Sri Krishna says: mayi bhakti, devotion towards me. Here the word Mayi does not refer to Sri Krishna as a person, but it refers to the Lord who can be invoked in any form that you like.

When

Sri Krishna prescribes Bhakti as a necessary condition for Gyanam, what kind of

Bhakti is he prescribing? It can't be Gyani bhakti, as only an Agyani has to

perform such a bhakti. Artha, artharthati bhaktas are also not seeking self-knowledge;

Artha Bhakta is one who is in crisis and and is seeking freedom from crisis. He

can't even study Vedanta properly. Artharthi Bhakta is only into it for artha

alone. So, only Jignyasu bhakta is left. In Ch.7 we saw God can be used as a

means for worldly ends or he can be looked upon as an end, himself. So, in this

bhakti, God is an end in himself.

And

if I have to choose God as the end or destination, I should have the maturity enough to understand that everything other than God is perishable and therefore they cannot give what I want. Thus, this bhakthi requires vairagyam towards the world; and without vairagyam, this bhakthi is impossible. Therefore, viveka janya, vairagya janya bhakthi is devotion, in which I know God alone can give me poornatvam, security, fulfillment, etc.

And that Bhakthi, Sri Krishna calls avyabhicharini bhakti, a devotion which is unswerving, unflinching and one pointed. And with undivided attention, even when the worldly transactions are going, and even when the worldly responsibilities are fulfilled, this devotee remembers that my goal is something else. So now and then, he should be reminded, what is the purpose of this life.

Often people ask what is the purpose of this life. Poornatvam prapthi is the purpose of this life. I have to keep on expanding enough to reach a stage beyond which I should not be able to expand, i.e., possible only in infinitude and that poornatvam is the goal. And reminding it off and on, is ananya yoga bhakthi and that is very important.

Viviktadeshasevitvam:

This

is also considered to be an important virtue that means resorting to a secluded place, now and then.

Developing

the habit of going to a secluded place and, resorting to solitude, in which I do not have anyone around. And I do not even carry a walkman.

And

here, I should find out whether I could confront myself. So more than facing other people in the society, I should ask a question whether I could face myself, whether I can accept myself, as these problems will surface, only when I am alone. In fact, seclusion introduces me to myself. And in fact the fundamental problem of samsara also we come to know only when we are alone, otherwise we try to escape ourselves through various diversions. A materialistic society is one, which provides maximum diversions as well. And the more you take to diversion, the less you diagnose your problem, and if you do not diagnose the problem, how will you work for a solution. Therefore, solitude is to know more about myself, and my problems. And this solitude has got another purpose as well; it is also an expression of Samsara. Samsara expresses in different forms; in the form of anxiety, in the form of fear; in the form of security; there are several versions of samsara, and one expression of samsara is the sense of loneliness. And this problem of loneliness can attack any person at any time in

life. And this can happen in the middle age, when the children leaves the nest or when children go out for either studies or they are married or as we grow old the people who around us start leaving. Thus loneliness is a potential problem, which can attack any human being at any time. And you have to learn to face it well ahead and not when it comes.

And therefore

better learn to be alone; better learn to enjoy solitude. And what is the best method; once in a while, just go for a walk, without walkman. Go for a walk, sit on the beach; do not take any friend or anyone. And find out how you feel. Old age will be wonderful if you have learned to tackle loneliness. It is wonderful because, the loneliness can be made use of, for vedantic nidhidhyasanam.

So why can't we go through the training rehearsal to gracefully grow old. The best rehearsal is learn to enjoy Solitude, not eternally, but once in a while, be alone and see what happens.

Does

it mean that one should not enjoy company? **Sri Krishna says, don't get addicted to people's company. We are mentally weak when we can't spend time in solitude.**

And

Shankaracharya in his commentary notes that it is OK, if the association is with satpurushah because they will guide you properly. Any other place, you should be

careful.

Shloka # 12:

**Steadfastness in the knowledge of the Self,
contemplation on the Goal of the knowledge of Reality-this is
spoken of as
Knowledge. Ignorance is that which is other than this.**

Tattvajnanarthadarshanam

Then the next virtue; in the first line in the second word, tattvagyanarthadarshanam. All these virtues or values are prescribed for the sake of Gyana योग्यता प्रपत्ति. And by gaining the eligibility for knowledge one gets Gyanam itself. And if I have to have a value for Gyana योग्यता, then I should have a value for Gyanam as well.

The more value I have with regard to the end, and then I will have the value for the means as well. So the love of the means is directly proportional to the love of the end. And therefore, these virtues I will value, if I have a value for Gyanam. Then, when will I have value for Gyanam? That I will have, only if I know the benefit of Gyanam.

Tattva Gyana artha means Gyana phalam, I should know what will I get out of this knowledge. Otherwise I will wonder why should I study and know. And that is why, of and on, Sri Krishna mentions to us the benefit of this knowledge.

The main

**benefit, given in the second chapter, is that I am comfortable
with myself,
irrespective of external conditions.**

Things

may be favorable or may not be favorable but since I have psychological immunity and I am not vulnerable to mood disorders. So, therefore, I

am not vulnerable to external conditions, I am ever balanced. And Gyanam is the one that gives me emotional immunity.

The more I appreciate this fact, the more I will have value for Gyanam. And the

more I have value for Gyanam, the more I will have value for Gyana yogyatha. So, from

Gyana yogyatha one goes

to Gyanam; and then on to Jivan mukthi. This route I should understand.

Therefore Sri Krishna tells us to remind you that Gyanam gives inner freedom; thus

the world cannot blackmail me anymore.

Adhyatma Gyana nithyatvam

is

the final and most important value of all.

It

is the systematic and consistent study of vedantic scriptures for a length of time, under the guidance of a competent Acharya. Without

that, I will only get a stray idea here and there.

It

is like dumping bricks in a pile that do not result in anything; rather than

cementing them in an organized manner, to result in a house.

Thus,

when you study Vedanta in a classroom like situation, we are studying in an

organized manner and so this knowledge will be like building a house. Random

study and knowledge will just remain a heap of rubble.

Therefore if the

knowledge is to be useful, Sri Krishna tells it should be systematically studied.

It is Sri Krishna's advice, not mine.

Sravanam

automatically implies there is a Guru. In Shloka # 8, Sri Krishna talked about

Guru Upasana. Only an Acharya can teach Shastra effectively.

So, this is Shastra

Vichara. All others prepare mind, while this produces knowledge. Shankaracharya

says it is like Pathyam (discipline) and Aushadham (medicine).

Pathyam

provides the condition and aushadham the cure. Virtue alone, without shastra,

will not result in Gyanam. If you follow all of them (virtues), knowledge will

occur. Hence the 20 Virtues including shastra study is called Gyanam.

Sri Krishna says anything opposite to that is agyanam. And how do you find the opposite? It is simple, you take every word, say amanitvam and it is the opposite of manitvam, adambitvam is the opposite dambitvam; ahimsa himsa, then kshanti, ashanti, you add 'a'; the opposite of all these together is called agyanam, that means these negative virtues will solidify your ignorance. Ignorance will get more and more knotty and more and more difficult to remove. And that alone in the 16th chapter Sri Krishna calls Daivi sampath and Asuri sampath.

Shloka # 13:

I shall speak of that which is to be known, by realizing which one attains Immortality. The supreme Brahman is without any beginning. That is called neither being nor non-being.

With

previous shloka, topic of Gyanam is over. So Kshetram,

Kshetragnya and Gyanam

topics are all over. Arjuna wanted to know about six topics and three are over.

The other three he requested were: Gneyam; Prakrti and Purushaha.

Gneyam:

Gneyam

is described from shloka 13 to # 19.

Gneyam

is same as Kshetrangya. Sri Krishna says, O Arjuna, I will now talk about a subject,

which every human being has to know while all other topics are optional. Why is

this topic unique? It is unique because knowing which, it solves a fundamental

problem of every human being, that is insecurity or fear of mortality that

exists from birth. It comes from childhood and every action of ours comes from

this feeling of insecurity. Our house, our job, children etc all of them

address our insecurity. It is a universal problem. It grows as we grow older.

When death comes, it is frightening. So every human being has to learn about this

to attain immortality or the freedom from insecurity.

And

therefore, Arjuna, listen to this carefully, as to what is that gneyam that is to

be known by all. Sri Krishna says: It is Param Brahma, that ultimate thing to

be known, called Brahman. The word Brahman means, the infinite one, Sathyam,

Gyanam, and Anantham.

Brahman

or Infinite means that which is free from threefold limitations; one limitation is called space-wise limitation; another limitation is called

Time-wise

limitation; third limitation is called attribute-wise limitation. Space-wise limitation is when I am here; unfortunately I cannot be elsewhere; you wish it would have been fine; to be in the house and also be attending the class also; but it is not possible.

Time-wise

limitation means I am limited by time, I

have

got a date of birth, and date of death as well. We just do not know when we will die.

Attribute-wise

limitation; having certain attributes,

if you have a particular attribute, the very presence of that attribute excludes all the other attributes. So if there is particular color, all other colors are not there; if I am a human being, my very humanness excludes cowness and horseness and all the other nesses. That is called attribute-wise limitation. And Brahma means that which is free from all the three limitations. And that is therefore called Param Brahma, which is the absolute. And that Param Brahma is to be known by all, to cross over mortality.

I do not know if I have told you this story before or not; when this Brahmin was crossing the river in a boat, the Brahmin asked do you know vyakaranam, the boatman asked vyakaran se kya karna, and then the Pandit said one fourth of

life is gone.

Then

the Brahmin asked; do you know tarka shastram. No. So two fourth of life or half is gone. Then do you know mimamsa Shastra? I know meen and mamsa. Then the Pandit said that three fourth of the life is gone. As they were talking the boat developed a leak and the water was gushing in and boatman tried to stop that leak and he was not able to; then he asked, Oh Panditji do you know how to swim. I do not know. Then your whole life is gone.

Now

Sri Krishna begins the description of Brahman. It is Anadi mat; that which does not have aadhi. aadhi means beginning; means both spacial and timewise and therefore it is anantham; the limitless one. In shloka, the word asat means karanam. Any cause is called asat, and the sat in this context means any effect or product or karyam. A cause is called asat because any cause is in potential form; and any thing potential is not available for our utility. Oil in the seed is potentially there; but I cannot use it. Butter in the milk is there; but I cannot use it; therefore any cause is in potential form; therefore, I cannot use it; therefore it is as though non-existent. Therefore the word used is asat; seemingly nonexistent, which means potentially existent karanam. And an sat, sat means karyam,

Karyam is as good as existent, because it is available for our use. And what is Brahman? Sri Krishna says Brahman is neither karanam nor Karyam. Brahman is beyond the realm of cause and effect.

Now it is becoming mind-blogging, because **the entire universe you experience is nothing but a flow of cause and effect.**

Yesterday is the cause for today's condition.

Today is the cause for tomorrow's condition. The entire creation I experience is nothing but cause effect flow. **And Sri Krishna says Brahman is beyond cause and effect.** That means it is beyond time. Because, cause and effect, wherever they exist, there Time is also there. How do you know? Because the difference between cause and effect is determined by time. Yesterday's cause is today's effect. Yesterday's Idli is today's body, your blood. Therefore the difference between karanam and karyam is determined by kala alone. Therefore whatever is beyond karya karana, is kalathitham.

Therefore

Brahman has no form, no attribute and it has no time. And Swamiji, how will I conceive it? It is not a concept to be conceived. And therefore Sri Krishna is beginning to describe the essence of the Upanishads. From Shloka #13 onwards, we get Upanishad sara (essence).

Upanishad says:

Brahman does not have shabda, sparsha, rupa, rasa and gandha. So no form, color, taste or touch and therefore you cannot see it; hear it, smell it, taste it or touch it and you are supposed to know that Brahman. How to know? That Sri Krishna will tell you in the following shlokas in the next class.

Take away:

Loneliness:

And therefore better learn to be alone; better learn to enjoy solitude. And

what is the best method; once in a while, just go for a walk, without walkman.

Go for a walk, sit on the beach; do not take any friend or anyone.

Don't

get addicted to people's company. We are mentally weak when we can't spend time

in solitude.

The

main benefit of Gyanam is that I am comfortable with myself, irrespective of external conditions.

The entire universe you experience is nothing but a flow of cause and effect. Yesterday is the cause for today's condition. Brahman, however, is beyond cause and effect.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Baghawad Gita, Class 170: Chapter 13, Verses 8 to 10

Shloka # 8:

(Shloka # 7 in

some books)

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

Continuing his teaching Swamiji said, From the 8th verse of the 13th chapter, Sri Krishna has taken up the third topic for analysis. He has already dealt with two topics; Kshetram and kshetragna and now he is dealing with the third topic called Gyanam and we saw that in this context, the word Gyanam refers to a set of virtues, which will keep the mind a healthy one. Just as there are certain physical parameters, which indicate the physical health, such as the pressure, the level of cholesterol, the level of hemoglobin, etc. similarly there are certain parameters or virtues, which indicate mental health. And this mental health is useful for every human being to enjoy a peace of mind and this mental health is particularly required for a Vedantic seeker because only if the mind is healthy, the intellect will be freely available for higher pursuit. If the mind is not healthy, the intellect will be a hostage of a sick mind. You will not allowed to think properly because a disturbed mind will suppress your intellect and that is why when you are mentally disturbed, you can never read anything where intellectual application is required. You cannot hear a discourse where intellectual application is required; intellectual application is possible only when the mind is relaxed. Mind is relaxed only when the mind is healthy; mind is healthy only when these parameters are handled and maintained. And therefore Sri Krishna gives the list. We covered the 8th shloka in which some of them have been mentioned; amanitvam, adambhitvam, ahimsa, Kshanti, arjavam, acharyopasanam, shaucham, sthairyam, atmavinigraha; 9 virtues have been enumerated; now in the next shloka, we are going to get some more virtues.

Shloka # 9:

13.9 Non-attachment with regard to objects of the senses, and also absence of egotism; seeing the evil in birth, death, old age, diseases and miseries;

Indriyartheshu vairagyam: these two words together, refers to the next virtue, viz., mastering of the sense organs. Sense organs are a set of instruments gifted to us by the Lord and they are very important instruments, as we interact with the world through them alone. We have two sets of sense organs, one set is called Gyanendriyani, through which we receive the input from the world, and we have another set of sense organs called karmendriyani, through which we express ourselves, we respond to the external world.

Therefore,
sense organs are extremely important for interaction with the world and not only for ordinary interactions but for all the spiritual sadhanas too, you require these organs. And since they are a set of instruments given to us, we have to make sure that they are under our control and we are not the slaves of our sense organs.

Sri Krishna calls this avoidance of slavery to the sense organs, indriya nigraha or indriya jayaha or damaha or even prathyahara. And this requires a constant alertness on our part, because the sense organs are generally in contact with the sensory world; and the five sense organs namely shabda, sparsha, rupa, rasa, and gandha; each of them functions in its own respective field. **And when the sense organs comes in contact with any object on a regular basis, unknowingly, the sense organs develop an attachment to**

the sense

objects. So every sense organ is prone to develop attachment to any particular

sense object; thus forming an addiction is the very nature of every sense

organ. So when you see an object or a person or a particular program in the

TV for a few days; initially, you say it is nice, it is wonderful, but gradually

the sense organs demand association with the sense object. And when they demand

it, it is for us to decide, whether we should fulfill the demand of the sense

organ. It is like bringing up a child.

A

child when you give some thing to him begins to demand more of it and the

mother gives in. Slowly the child's demand becomes an addiction and when demand

is not met, it goes into tantrums and the mother continues to cave in. Then, a

time comes, when the child knows how to make the mother do what it wants. Every

sense object is like such a child. Initially you allow the sense organ to

function in a field; later the sense organs begin to demand; and once you

pamper the sense organs, you have become an addict or slave. And afterwards, when

you try to master, the sense organ has become powerful enough that it will know

how to throw tantrums. They will not allow you to master them.

Thus, if you are addicted to coffee, if you don't get it on time; you are upset; some even get headaches. Pampered by me, the sense organs can become so powerful that they can even

drag the mind to its field; and then the intellect tells, that it is not good; I should not pamper, I should not become a slave; because I want to attain Moksha from the whole creation. And being the slave of coffee, cigarette, liquor or something else, if I am not a master of even few small things, how can I become a master of, how can I get the freedom from, the whole creation? And therefore the intellect begins to feel the guilt and that is how the tug-of-war begins; intellect decides I want to get out of the habit and even after I give up the habit for a few days; thereafter he gets addicted. Mark Twain said: Who said giving up smoking is difficult. I have given up many times. Then begins the big tug of war as the intellect says that I am a Gita student, and I should be a master, I should not be a weakling, and its takes a wonderful decision; and for a few days it is implemented, and again it falls back in the same old rut, called relapse. And then once the intellect fails a few times, intellect does not know how to handle the guilt. Then intellect uses another method; because the guilt is really painful, at the same time, the intellect is not able to find a method of getting out of the addiction. So it decides that, if you cannot defeat your enemy, join it. And the joining is called, justification. So the intellect knows how to justify every addiction.

Like that person who wanted to show the harm of taking liquor and he did an experiment, he just put an insect inside the liquor and the insect died. In front were sitting a lot of liquor addicts. He showed the experiment and asked them what is the conclusion you arrive at? Because the insect died in the alcohol; one fellow got up and said: Whoever takes liquor will have a clean stomach without any germs, because, they will all be killed and I will have a clean stomach. So, any argument you give, the intellect knows how to manipulate. And **therefore the best solution with regard to any addiction is: prevention is always better than trying to cure.** And therefore alertness becomes important and that is why they say, once in a while, say No to anything that you regularly do. **So all**

forms of tapas, vrthams that we practice are all meant for avoidance of sense-slavery. In yoga Shastra, it is called pratyahara; in Vedanta Shastra it is called damah; sadhana chashtutaya sampathi calls it sama, dama and uparathi. So indriyartheshu means vairagyam which, means dispassion, not hatred; you are allowed to enjoy legitimate pleasures without becoming a slave of that pleasure. While you can enjoy any pleasure, let not the sense organs decide what you should do. So it is an important virtue.

Anahankara: Ahankara

is self-conceit; Anahanakara is freedom from self-conceit. Amanitvam also means

freedom from self-conceit. Why does Sri Krishna repeat the same quality, again?

In normal context both would mean the same thing. However, in this context

there is a difference:

Amanitvam: Is lack of

self-conceit at the thinking level.

Anahankara: is freedom from

self-conceit at the verbal level. I don't use the word I at all times in all

my conversations, always using first person singular, I, mine etc. Any subject

you talk about, this person with self-conceit will convert into a subject

matter relating to him. You talk about an event in America; when I went to that

place, he will convert it into 'I'. Any topic under the Sun, this fellow will

convert into 'I' topic, that is called self-propagation, self-proclamation, blowing

his own trumpet; that is ahankara.

Janma mrtyu jara vyadhi dukha doshanudarshanam.

It conveys the meaning, don't be body oriented. Life is not only in physical existence; you are something else than this body. Body orientation will cause obstructions in spiritual growth. What are problems caused by body orientation?

Vedanta does not recommend neglecting your body. Body is required for both spiritual and material pursuits. It is only a means; it is annamaya kosha, the very first sheath.

How to be detached from body? By, constantly reminding ourselves of the various defects of Deha abhimana will help us. Thus, body is subject to five problems:

1. Birth or Janma.
2. Jara; or old age, with its related problems. As I age, I will have no power to decide on functioning of the body. I will be helpless.
3. Vyadhi: disease.
4. Mrthyu: Death; or separation from everything I own or love.
5. Dukham: These are the problems or sorrows of life.

Constant remembrance of these five doshas will assist one in not having Deha abhimana; a pre-requisite for atma gyanam.

Shloka # 10:

13.10 Non-attachment and absence of fondness with regard to sons, wives, homes, etc., and constant equanimity of the mind with regard to the attainment of the desirable and the

undesirable;

Ashakti: means mental detachment with respect to any object, situation or person. It is avoidance of mental slavery with regard to any external object, situation or person. Previously we talked about indriyartheshu vairagyam. Now we are talking about ashakti. Both mean detachment, but the difference is, previously it was detachment from the standpoint of sense organs; it was indriya nigraha; here ashakti deals with mano nigraha, detachment at mental level. So previous one is damaha; the present one is Samaha. And why does Sri Krishna talk about both of them?

Mental detachment cannot be easily attained, because mind is a subtler instrument. Therefore taking the mind away from the object of attachment is extremely difficult; whereas sense organs are external instruments; they are grosser instruments and therefore, they can be controlled in a relatively easier manner. And how can you control the sense organs, by physically being away from the place. If a person has a tendency to use an addiction causing object; he can be physically separated from it. In all de-addiction centers, the object of addiction will not be available.

The problem is: even when the sense organs are physically separated from the sense objects, the mind can continue to dwell on it. And as long as the mind dwells on that, again re-addiction or relapse is possible. Therefore as long as the person is physically away, he will have control.

So initially you start from sense control; and even after sense control; mind continues

to have a vasana and therefore we have to handle the mind also. To handle the mind it has to be educated on the evils involved in the addiction, and once the mind is mastered; thereafter, even if the object of addiction is in front, I remain aloof. I have got out of habit of smoking or drinking. If the other person is using that right in front, I can remain there without having a temptation. So this is a higher stage of detachment born out of viveka shakti. And only when I say NO out of discrimination; it becomes transcending. If I stop them, because of the others' pressure, it becomes suppression. Therefore, suppression should be converted to transcendence. And that transcendence is inner detachment. After inner detachment, I am not worried about temptation.

Once the mind is mastered; let this person be in any field; he can never get addicted to anything or temptations. Until that possibility is there, I have to physically get away from the tempting situations and therefore ashakti; that is detachment or dispassion at the mental level.

Putradaragrhadishuanabhishvangaha: To be read as putradararagrhadishu anabhishvangaha. Bhishvangaha means over attachment or intense attachment. Anabhishvangaha means absence of over attachment or absence of excessive attachment. Sri Krishna gives a list of important things one can get attached to. They are one's child, spouse, own house and other such things. These are people with whom your life is closely

intertwined.

And

with regard to them you can never avoid attachment. Sri Krishna admits that attachment cannot be avoided with regards to a few things and beings with which you regularly move.

And

therefore Sri Krishna says, I do not ask you to avoid attachment. I am only saying, avoid over attachment.

This

applies mainly to Grihasthas and not Sanyasis.

Now

the next question is: How to differentiate between attachment and excessive attachment?

Saint Anandagiri, who writes a sub commentary on Shankaracharya's commentary, gives a beautiful explanation on differentiating attachment and over attachment. He defines attachment as mamakara; claiming a thing or a person as mine; he belongs to me. I belong to you; you belong to me.

But when the attachment is excessive; then it is no more mamakara; my identification becomes so complete; that I become one with that object; and therefore I do not see any difference between that object or person and myself. That means whatever happens to that person I take as happening to myself. And naturally, when that person is dead, instead of saying that person is gone and I continue to survive; I feel that I myself am dead and gone; that means my life appears to be empty. If I think my life has no meaning, without another person; this is excessive attachment. If I think my life has no meaning without another person, it is excessive attachment, because the fact is, every life has got its own meaning,

irrespective of other people being there or not; because we have all come to the earth for the particular purpose of spiritual evolution and every one of us has come independently; we are never born together.

We

are also never going to die together. As Swami Chinmayananda says: All alone is

Life. And therefore we have come here for our spiritual growth; and God has

connected a few people, so that our growth is helped. And the people will be

around as long as there is needed for my growth and once that purpose is

served; thereafter each Jeeva has to continue his own journey.

It is like a train

journey. I have entered the compartment at a particular station and I have started

the journey. People come and go during journey but we all have our own

destination. The whole earth is like a

compartment alone; we have all come together and we progress and thereafter, we

have to continue our journey in our own direction. If this is forgotten; I will

think my life is purposeless without another person; and once that thought

comes, it has become excessive attachment.

That

means I cannot imagine living without that person.

Sri

Krishna says you can cry, nothing wrong in it. Attachment will give grief; but

you should never forget; that everyone is an individual and we have to make our

own journey. And therefore not forgetting the fact that life

is like a train
journey is the virtue.

Nityam samacittatvam

ca ishtanishtopapattishu: This gives
the essence of karma yoga.

Whether

situations that arrive are favorable or unfavorable, I have
freedom from

elation or depression. All situations change. Learn to
maintain equanimity in

all situations. Let it be a manageable disturbance. How to
practice this? Sri

Krishna says, every human being must practice equanimity.;
this indicates that

Sri Krishna accepts that every human being will face favorable
and unfavorable

situations. Reading puranas one sees that every avatara faced
ups and downs.

How can I, a small being, avoid it? Nalla, Rama, Yudhishtira
all suffered; so

life is a mixture of both.

According

to God and shastra, spiritual growth requires suffering. Only
in suffering

there is greater growth. Opposites will always arrive in our
lives. Vedanta

teaches one to have equanimity in all situations.

How

to maintain equanimity? Vedanta gives us two methods.

Karma

yoga is considered a short-term response, like a first aid.

Karma Yoga was

detailed in Shloka 2.48

Gyana

Yoga is more of a long-term response, the ultimate cure.

Karma

Yoga gives relative peace of mind while Gyana yoga gives permanent peace of mind.

In

karma yoga one has to accept every experience as Ishwara Prasadam. Equanimity must be maintained throughout the waking state.

And why is it called prasada? The word prasada means tranquility of mind; and when you look upon anything as a gift from the Lord; it gives you tranquility of mind; and therefore the object is called prasada; So by implication vadai, kadalai, chundal; why are they prasadam; They are not prasadam; When you receive them, as a gift coming from the Lord, because of your devotion, you have got a sense of fulfilment; and that gives you tranquility and therefore I should have prasada bhavana; that it is coming from the Lord.

Prasada

Bhavana is possible only if I have devotion towards God; else there is no karma yoga. Dayanada swamiji used to say that Karma yoga exists only due to Bhakti yoga. It is one of the levels of Bhakti yoga. There is no secular karma yoga; an atheist can't be a karma yogi.

Karma

yoga presupposes faith in God. And of course karma yogi does not know the ultimate nature of God. If he knows, he will be a Gyani; so he has got his own concept of God, in any form he likes an ishta devatha, as eka rupa Ishvara or aneka

rupa Ishvara.

And

therefore Sri Krishna wants to say **without bhakthi, karma yoga is not possible**. And therefore Arjuna, Mayi bhakthi is the next important virtue. So Mayi means in Me. In Me means, in Ishvara; and what type of devotion should it be?

Take away:

And

when the sense organs comes in contact with any object on a regular basis, unknowingly, the sense organs develop an attachment to the sense objects. So every sense organ is prone to develop attachment to any particular sense object; **thus forming an addiction is the very nature of every sense organ.**

The

best solution with regard to any addiction is: prevention is always better than trying to cure.

So

all forms of tapas, vrthams that we practice are all meant for avoidance of sense-slavery.

Constant remembrance of

these five doshas (birth, old age, disease, death and related sorrows)will

assist one in not having Deha abhimana; a pre-requisite for atma gyanam.

With Best Wishes,

Baghawad Gita, Class 169: Chapter 13, Verse 8

Shloka # 8:

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

Continuing his teaching

Swamiji said, having

talked about the topics of Kshetram and kshetragna up to shloka No.7, now from shloka no.8 onwards, up to shloka no.12, Sri Krishna

deals with the topic of Gyanam which in this context means, those virtues which

will make the mind fit for receiving the self-knowledge. And he gives a list of

20 virtues here; which has to be carefully cultivated by every person. **In fact, gaining self-knowledge really does**

not take time; it is relatively easier; but cultivating these virtues alone

involves time and effort.

And therefore, this is as important or more important than even Vedantic study. And therefore Sri Krishna will deal with this topic again and again. The 16th and 17th chapters are exclusively dedicated to deal with this topic. So we will deal with this again later. And now we have seen some of the virtues mentioned in the 8th shloka; that is amanitvam, adambhitvam and ahimsa.

Amanitvam is freedom from self-glorification, or humility or vinayaha; adambhitvam is simplicity and ahimsa is non-violence at the physical, verbal and even mental levels. Up to this we saw in the last class.

The fourth value is **Kshanti**.

Kshanti has two aspects.

1. **Titiksha** is

acceptance of all choice-less situations, without any resistance. While we have freewill, unfortunately, reality is that, we have no control on many aspects of our life.

And all such uncontrollable, helpless situations, I call choice-less situations and in the second chapter, Sri Krishna uses the word, *apariharya artha*; *artha* means a situation, *apariharya* means over which I do not have a control at all. **And since I do not have any control over the situation, I have to only change my attitude in such a way that I welcome, I accept the situation and this acceptance of the situation is called titiksha.**

When we look at life, the past I cannot change; as such it is choiceless. Thus, I should accept my past; such as my parents, my age etc; as it is. I have to accept my gray hair, my age etc. They are all choice-less.

Present is also choice-less as it has already arrived. So, prepare mind to accept it. This acceptance is

known as Titiksha. The more you put resistance to accepting it, the more you get heated up. Now there are two types of acceptance: 1) Healthy acceptance and 2) unhealthy acceptance.

Unhealthy acceptance: the feeling, **what cannot be cured has to be endured.** It is acceptance with bitterness; self pity, anger towards the world and god. This unhealthy acceptance is not Titiksha. A mind with this thinking is not available for positive action. He constantly complains. He distributes his grief to others as well. Mind is not constructive. **I become a complaining person.**

2. Healthy acceptance: I don't allow choice-less situation to overcome and immobilize me. I ignore the situation and work constructively. It is difficult but possible to ignore an unfavorable situation and continue with life. When you read life stories of handicapped people it provides inspiration. Stephen Hawkins is an example.

This is the first aspect of Titiksha.

Even though past and present can't be changed, I can change the future. Astrology can tell us our past but it too can't predict future as Prayaschitha can affect future. Future is choice-full. I can use freewill and resources to improve future.

I can work for improving and transforming the future. But here

also we should remember any transformation requires time. Any transformation, any growth, any Change, requires its own time.

So, I need patience. If I have disease, I don't have to suffer, as medical science advances every day.

When you want to change people, one can change them but it takes time. So, I need to wait.

And this capacity to wait with regard to the future is the second part of the titiksha called Kshama. This capacity to wait for future is called **Kshama**. Even in front of a traffic signal, one needs Kshama. You can see lack of kshama in front of the traffic signal, especially during rush hour, as people don't have patience. Everything takes its own time. Even a child takes ten months to grow.

Bhartrhari says, Oh Mind, why are you always in a hurry, you want tomorrow to come today itself. You want next year to come this year itself. Ask your mind to wait and be patient. The future has to unfold in its own time; and you cannot hasten the process. Let the future unfold; you face it when it comes; we will cross the bridge when it comes; not brooding over the past too much; not getting concerned over the future too much.

There is no brooding over the past, nor be concerned about the future; develop patience in the present.

If I don't have Titiksha (acceptance) and Kshama (capacity to wait) there will be stresses and strains in personality.

Anayasa: means freedom from stress. Sandhyavandanam, performed several times a day is to help

ease the day-to-day stress in life. Thus physical and mental stress makes you irritable. You are at a flashpoint, in tamil: Mukulai Shundi (anger at nose tip).

Dayananda saraswati says, this irritable condition is the accumulated stress and often the children are the victims; and previously when father is stressed out, mother was there as a cushion; now both of them are working; therefore generally the temperature at home is above 100.

And children becomes victims and they also get the internal stress; when they grow up, they take it out on their wives and spouses, and thus we have a nuclear family, ready to explode. Therefore Kshanti is an extremely important value to avoid stress; Stress is inflicting injury on myself. And when the stressful person explodes it is inflicting injury on the other people too. Therefore a stressed person is always practicing himsa, upon himself and others. Therefore, if ahimsa has to be followed, Kshanti is required. Kshanti is the only method to develop ahimsa. And therefore it is very important value in the shastra and it is called anayasaha; meaning a stress free relaxed mind.

So to practice Ahimsa, Kshanti (patience) is essential.

Aarjavam: meansalignment of threefold personality; Kayika, Vachika and Manasika. If thought, word and deed are integrated one has

a healthy personality. If there is no alignment; where, I think one thing, say something different and act even more differently; this causes a split personality. This causes stresses and strains in a person. It causes disintegration and destruction.

Like

any machine with several different parts; all of them should be in alignment.

Adjustment is required, when you install huge machinery; the mechanics have to

come and align. Even in a tape recorder, the head has to be aligned; there also

it is said 'head' has to be aligned and cleaned at regular intervals; otherwise

recording does not take place. Similarly your head, not only tape recorder. And

your ears, they all must be aligned; otherwise after one hour, if someone asks,

how was the class, you will say it was wonderful; what did swamiji say; that is

what I do not know. What was wonderful, I do not know?

When my organs are not integrated, then I am destroyed. Destroyed not in the physical sense, but destroyed in the spiritual sense; I cannot accomplish anything higher. And therefore integrity, or uprightness or alignment or harmonization of the personality is important. If you go to a music concert, there are many instrument players like Mridangist; gadam, violinist, ganjira, and musician. You will find that they are spending a lot of time adjusting the sruthi. Aligning of the throat and the tamera is required. If it is a north Indian music concert, they are very particular about shruti. According to them, carnatic musicians do not have shruti at all.

The

North Indians take more time to adjust the shruti than even the concert time.

So if a music concert requires alignment, life is the greatest music, which should give happiness to me, and which should give happiness to others. There should be no apasruti, that means my thought, word, and deed should be

harmonized. That is why we have one of the most wonderful upanishadic prayers that say; let me not have a split personality.

Let me not have a split personality. Let me not have a multiple personality syndrome. And Dayanada Swamji beautifully says that Ravana shown with his 10 heads, indicate his multiple personality and the best method to develop arjavam is starting with punctuality. I feel the first exercise in arjavam is punctuality. And it is one thing; we do not have at all in India, because nobody values punctuality. So, **first exercise in arjavam is punctuality.**

If for some reason I am not able to make it on time, I need to inform other person. This is Aarjavam.

So being punctual and or meeting commitments is Aarjavam. Satyam is a subdivision of Aarjavam.

Acharya Upasanam: is a very important virtue for Vedantic students. It means worship of teacher. Here worship of teacher does not go to a person. Guru represents Shastra Gyanam within him. He is a temple of scriptures. A question comes up as to why I should worship Shastras or Vedas?

Why

should I worship the Veda?

This is a very important thing for us to know. The knowledge that we want to acquire through the Shastra is a knowledge, which can be acquired through Shastra alone. It is not a knowledge, which can be acquired through any other source of knowledge. The Shastra is like a sixth sense organ. Every sense organ like eye, ears, etc. is capable of giving a unique knowledge, which the other sense organs cannot give. Eyes can give the knowledge of color; the other four sense organs cannot give that. Similarly, ears can give the knowledge of sound; other sense organs cannot give that. And Veda is like the sixth sense organ and it gives me a knowledge, which cannot be gained through any other means of knowledge. And since it is a unique knowledge, which cannot be gained through other sense organs, the other sense organs cannot confirm or contradict that knowledge. Other sense organs can never verify the Vedic knowledge. So we have to accept what vedas reveal, as a new knowledge and this accepting capacity is called Shraddha. **Shraddha means learning to accept the knowledge given by the veda as a unique knowledge which is not available for any other sense organs to verify.** And this Shraddha is an extremely difficult thing to develop and one of the methods to develop shraddha is through worship or Upasana. Imagine there is a person with only four sense organs. From birth he has got only four sense organs. He does not have eyes; he is blind from birth. And he

has got total
faith in these four sense organs. And, at the age of 50, I
give him the gift of
a fifth sense organ called eye, and I tell him eyes are
another means of
knowledge; and the eyes give a unique
knowledge which you have to accept as a fact. And suppose this
person argues that he will not accept. whatever the eyes
reveal; He
says I want to verify through the other four
sense organs. because I have faith only in the 4 sense organs;
the 5th sense organ, I do not want to accept; therefore I want
to
verify the color, which the eyes reveal with the ears. The
ears can never
confirm the color; ears cannot contradict the color either.
Therefore, I should
never attempt to verify the knowledge given by one sense organ
with the help of
another sense organ. Then what is my attitude? Every sense
organ reveals a
fact, which cannot be proved or disproved by the other sense
organs and in our
tradition we say that veda
is like the sixth sense organ And that is why in our tradition
right from
birth, they tried to cultivate Shraddha in the veda; learn to
look at the veda as the sixth
sense organ, so that the knowledge received from the veda, I
accept as
a fact. And suppose a person says; like this blind man; I too
will not accept
the eyes, if it cannot be verified by the other four sense
organs; and he
refuses to accept the eyes. In this case who is going to be
the loser? If I

refuse to accept the eyes, only I will not get the new knowledge of color. Similarly, if I refuse to accept the veda as another instrument of knowledge, I will never get unique knowledge given by the Veda and I will continue to strive to prove the vedic wisdom by other means, which I will never be able to prove; that is why science can neither prove God nor disprove it. **Because God can be understood only through the sixth sense organ, called the Veda. And therefore the shraddha towards the veda should be exactly like my shraddha towards my sense organs.**

And how to develop that shraddha; it has to come from birth itself and that is why they kept acharya upasana, as part of our culture. Veda is another form of eye called Veda Chakshu; and therefore acharyopasanam is the capacity; the attitude towards Veda, as a pramanam. This is extremely important.

Shaucham: Cleanliness

and or purity of surroundings. Keep surroundings clean. Keep dress clean and simple; keep body clean; keep speech clean, Vaktapas. Then there is cleanliness at the thought level. And that means ultimately all those virtues, which will keep my mind healthy. And what are those virtues, which keep the mind healthy.

Amanitvam, Adambhitvam,

Ahimsa, Kshanti, Acharyopasanam, etc.

they are called mental hygiene, which will lead to mental health.

These virtues lead to mental hygiene, which leads to clean thoughts.

And,

the opposite of each one of them are: Amanitvam's opposite is manitvam. Adambhitvam's opposite is dambhitvam. Ahimsa's opposite is

himsa. Anarjavam's

opposite is arjavam. The

opposite of each one of these virtues is mental un-hygiene if that quality is

there; which will cause mental sickness and therefore enjoyment of a healthy

mind by cultivating all the virtues prescribed here is called Shaucham.

Sthairyam: And the next virtue

means sthiratha. It includes, Will

power; Perseverance, Commitment, all is called Sthiram. When we start any

pursuit, certainly there will be obstacles and setbacks. Some of them are

actual obstacles and some are imaginary obstacles. And because of the actual or

imaginary obstacle, if I withdraw from my pursuit, it is asthirathvam.

Sthirathvam means any type of obstacle may come, but I will continue.

Brthrahri,

in his niti shastra, says there are three types of people.

Lowest

level person is one, who does not start anything, as he is afraid of failure.

The second level person is one who starts but at first sign of obstacle stops.

The third level person, Uttama person, is one who continues despite obstacles;

or as saying goes, when going gets tough, tough get going.

Stories

such as Bhagirtaha prayatnam; Samundra manthanam; are all examples of tenacity.

It is an important virtue for spiritual seekers.

AtmaVinigraha: The next one is atmavinigraha.

Atma vinigraha

means

self-mastery. Being the master of my own equipment or instruments. We have seen

in Tatva bodha, we have got seventeen organs. pancha jnanedrianis, karmendriyanis five are

there; pranas, five are

there; mind, the emotional faculty and buddhi, the intellectual faculty;

seventeen instruments, we have got inbuilt in us and through these instruments

alone, I have to accomplish any goal in life. And before using any instrument,

I have to make sure that instrument is healthy and the instrument is under my

control. In Kathopanishad,

we saw the example of the chariot, the horses, the reins, the driver, etc. The

horses are like the sense organs; and so are the reins and they are controlled by

the mind and intellect is comparable to the driver. We required an informed

driver and we require the controlled steering or reins and the horses must be

tamed and obedient, then alone I can reach the destination. In the same way, we have the body, senses, the mind and the intellect. Unless I can manage myself, there is no question of managing a company.

Ashtanga

Yoga is to help us with Atmavinigraha.

Asanas

help us control the body; Pranayama helps control pranamaya kosha; Pratyahara

controls the mind; Then they got dharana, dhyana and samadhi, that

provide mastery over the mind, developing attention span, developing focusing

capacity. For developing these faculties the three exercises are: dharana, dhyana and samadhi, or absorption.

Swami Chinmayanda used to tell that the student must be so absorbed in the

class that even if the ceiling comes down, student should not know what is

happening. Otherwise, if someone comes late, we will be watching his movements,

what dress, color, etc. That the I should die to the world, that is samadhi, the absorption

capacity.

Take away:

Titiksha:

And since I do not have any control over the situation, I have to only change

my attitude in such a way that I welcome, I accept the situation and this

acceptance of the situation is called titiksha.

Kshama: So to practice Ahimsa, Kshanti (patience) is

essential.

Shradha means learning to accept the knowledge given by the veda as a unique knowledge which is not available for any other sense organs to verify.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Baghawad Gita, Class 168: Chapter 13, Verse 8

Shloka # 8:

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

Upto shloka # 7 Sri Krishna dealt with Kshetram and Kshetragnya. Kshetram and Kshetragnya are also known as Atma and Anatma; and also called Deha and Dehi in chapter 2. One is matter principle while other is Consciousness principle. Sri Krishna was clarifying the six questions raised by Arjuna.

Now from the 8th shloka, which I introduced in the last class, up to 12th shloka, in five verses, Sri Krishna is now dealing with Gyanam, which is the third topic. In this shloka, Gyanam means the group of mental virtues required to enjoy a fit mind

for gaining spiritual Knowledge; or spiritual-knowledge-friendly virtues.

If knowledge is given to an unfit mind, such a mind will resist it and it will not be assimilated.

Unassimilated knowledge, like unassimilated, undigested food can become a

poison. Now these virtues are also known as Dharma. Dharma is the steppingstone

for moksha. Many virtues are enumerated in the Gita and shastras. Brthhari

wrote the Niti Shatakam a book of 100 virtues. Sri Krishna is introducing this

topic now and each of 20 virtues will be discussed.

Amanitvam: Manitvam

means self-glorification; thinking I am a great person, while Amanitvam is

freedom from self-conceit or the humility. Why is self-conceit a big obstacle?

When we accomplish something, society admires, recognizes and rewards.

It

often starts with the family itself; the parents admire when we do even a small

thing. When we listen to this glorification, admiration of others, generally

our tendency will be, to easily join that group, and along with the society, we

also start enjoying admiration of ourselves. When the society admires or

rewards, it is the duty of the society and it is perfectly OK, but unknowingly

we also start, like others, admiring ourselves. This self-admiration is the beginning,

the seed for self-conceit.

What is the problem due to it? Vedanta says problem of self-admiration is a very big trap for spiritual seeker. **Once we start self-admiration, it causes addiction to it and we look for more and more of it. Once addicted, we want it all the time; and when deprived of it, it causes great disturbance in us.** Like a smoker, suffers deprivation symptoms when he quits smoking, like a liquor addict suffers when he tries to stop it; once we get addicted to the glorification of others, the deprivation causes lot of problems and therefore, just as any other sense addition has to be carefully avoided,

Similarly, admiration addiction also one has to carefully avoided. Therefore the first problem is that it causes addiction.

Second problem with self-admiration is that I get so excited about it that I get carried away and my discriminatory powers get robbed by name and fame. Once this is lost, we get delusional. I forget important facts of life. What are these important facts of life:

1) Whatever be my accomplishments, I can never take full credit for it, as there are many other factors as well. This forgetfulness is caused by excitement. So, most of the credit goes to many others. Whatever be the accomplishment, my contribution is only one of the factors; for every accomplishment, there are innumerable people involved, innumerable factors involved, I can never take full credit, but in excitement, I do lose sight of this fact and I claim

and feel that "I", with my full power, I have accomplished that. This is the forgetfulness caused by excitement. I should remember that whatever be the name and fame I get, 99% of the credit goes to many other factors; I can perhaps take a little credit. This is first fact that is lost sight of by a conceited person.

And the second fact that is forgotten in self-conceit is, even if I have contributed something for an accomplishment; whatever it be; may be music; may be education, may be sport; according to the Gita which we have seen, even that little contribution from me, is really speaking, not my contribution. I find I am born with that talent; that talent is a gift from the Lord, which is a fact, revealed in the 10th chapter of the Gita, called Vibuthi yoga: I do not enjoy any credit, any glory, it is a grace of the Lord's glory, which is expressing, manifesting through me, and therefore, the so-called limited contribution too, I cannot claim. That is the fact; but in self-conceit, I forget this fact also. I forget others' contribution; I forget Lord's contribution. Thus, self-conceit is an obstacle to devotion. Self-conceit and bhakthi cannot co-exist, because a self-conceited person forgets Lord's contribution, which is the only contribution.

Third, however great I am,
I can never claim I am greatest one; in world there are people, there will be people, who will be greater than me.

It is a world of sadishayatvam. It is a beautiful word used in shastra. Sadishayatvam means anything can be bettered. Anything can be improved.

Anything can be improved,
say the shastras. Self-conceit robs me of this fact. I can never appreciate another person who is greater than me. When I come across such a person my

self-conceit does not allow me to admire. I alone want to be center of admiration. I develop jealousy, anger etc. In its extreme, I can even tend to eliminate the other person from the field.

A way to test my self-conceit is to ask if I can comfortably admire glory of other people? This will tell me how self-conceited a person, I am.

In our village, there was a temple nagaswaram person. He used to play in the temple rituals, daily. It is told that he was so self-conceited, he thought that he is the nagaswaram vidhwan. And just to tease him, somebody asked him: Hello Sivarama, how is Karikurichi Arunchalam? He was one of the nagaswara vidhwans. How is he?

And you know what was his answer: Ah.., he will also blow air'. He cannot accept others' greatness. That is the indication of self-conceit. And once this self-conceit comes, the door of devotion is blocked; and without bhakthi, Gyanam is never possible.

So one has to develop humility. Puranas have many stories related to manitvam. Every self-conceited person will be humiliated at some point or other.

Humiliation is called humbling experience. Every conceited person will be humiliated at one time or other; what do you mean by humiliation; **a lesson in humility is humiliation. Humiliation means humility creation.** And all our acharyas you find in any field, they all were embodiments of humility. They were all great in their field and they were all embodiments of humility. If you read the works of Kalidasa, he has written, (he is supposed to be, or the greatest Sanskrit scholar) several poems and several dramas.

In

all of them, he writes an introductory verse. In all of them, you can see how humble he is. And not only he expresses his humility, he teaches humility to others.

All Acharyas were

embodiments of humility. From this we come to know how much importance is given to

humility. And in one of the works,

known as shatpadi

sthothram, Shankaracharya's first

prayer is: O Lord remove my self-conceit; make me humble.

Humility is required

in all fields; humility is particularly required for Vedantic seeker,

because without humility bhakti cannot come, and without bhakthi Gyanam cannot come.

Adambhitavam:

Dambhitvam means physical

expression of self-conceit. Here I want admiration at physical level as well. I

want an attractive body, attractive dress, a head turner, through my walking,

attention seeking expression and all forms of pretensions.

Thus, Adhambhitvam

means unpretentious, simple, inconspicuous, even though he is great. Hence the

saying empty vessels make noise.

Ahimsa: It

means non-injury to other beings. Like different weapons to hurt others,

we already have three weapons to hurt others. They are: Kayika, Vachika, and Manasa; the very body

is a weapon, which can cause injury to others; hands and legs,

which bhagavan has given with good intention, but we use it terribly. And similarly vak is another instrument; animals do not have this instrument; therefore, animals cannot verbally injure; human beings are the unique ones who have this most wonderful instrument. It can be used or it can be terribly abused; verbal abuse you know is worse than physical ones. So there is a saying that the wound caused by the tongue will not heal easily. And the third instrument is mind, anthakaranam; and mentally also himsa is possible, through thoughts. Mentally cursing others and remember thoughts are powerful forces and therefore kayika, vachika, and manasa are three forms of himsa.

In the Ten Commandments, Ahimsa is the first commandment. It is a major vow for a spiritual seeker.

I should not do what I do not expect others to do, to me; is a very simple law. I do not want any living being to injure me, even mosquitoes. And if I do not want others to hurt me, it becomes a universal law and it is an instinctive expectation; nobody teaches this; it is instinctive and natural expectation; what is my expectation; nobody should hurt me, which means everyone, else has got the same instinctive expectation that I should not hurt him or her and therefore this becomes a universal law and therefore only when I follow a Universal law, as Dayananda swami says, only when I do not rub against universal law, I can have peace of mind. Any time I am violating a universal law, also called dharma, I am hurting myself.

Dayananda Swamiji used to

say, the Tamarind tree has a rugged bark and if you rub yourself against the tree, the bare body can be hurt. Dharma is like a Tamarind tree; nothing happens to Dharma; I hurt myself.

Second: Whatever I perform in world remains as a deposit and that alone I can take back. If I contribute Himsa, I will get back Himsa from world. If I give love, I get back love. If I don't want injury from world, I should not injure.

Third: The tendency to hurt others is natural and impulsive. We have a lot of expectations from family, friends, neighbors etc. Raga Dvesha, which, when fulfilled, I am happy; but when others behave according to their own free will, most of my expectations are then not met and if that expectation is not fulfilled I get into a rage. When expectations are not fulfilled, the natural consequence is that I am hurt. Non-fulfillment of expectation is bound to hurt me. And once I am hurt, the immediate reaction is attacking that object which is the cause of my hurt. The object means, the person who did not behave, and the set up which was not up to the mark; a hurt person, reacts causing hurt to others. So the psychology is hurt person hurts others. An injured person injures others. And there is no gap between my injury and my causing injury to others; it is so impulsive.

If this should not happen, it can occur only in one condition, my mind should be sensitive to feel the pain of the other person. Once I feel the pain of the other when I hurt the other person in impulse; I also go through the pain. I also go through the pain like the mother who beats the child; and afterwards the mother is never comfortable

because the mother goes through the pain, which the child goes through.

So for a sensitive person hurting another person is like a self-injury. I don't want to hurt myself, so I don't hurt others.

I go through sleepless nights when I hurt another. My mind registers others pain. So, my mind has to be sensitive (empathic) to follow Ahimsa. Vedanta requires a sensitive mind. Even reading newspaper and reading about pain should hurt me. Crime itself becomes punishment for a sensitive mind.

Kshanti: This word has several meanings. One meaning is mental immunity, where mind is not disturbed when my expectations are not met. I need to develop the immunity to weather, economy, people etc. Just as a person has physical immunity, I can have mental immunity as well.

Take away:

Ahimsa:

I should not do what I do not expect others to do, to me; is a very simple law.

I do not want any living being to injure me, even mosquitoes.

For a sensitive person hurting another person is like a self-injury. I don't want to hurt myself, so I don't hurt others.

A lesson in humility is humiliation. Humiliation means humility creation.

Once we start self-admiration, it causes addiction to it and we look for more and more of it.

Once addicted,
we want it all the time; and when deprived of it, it causes
great disturbance
in us.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

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 Kshetragnya, 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

Kshetrgnya.

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 categorizes 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 Sankhya 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.

Prakriti does not have origination. Prakriti is basic matter. If you want to understand in scientific language, it is the condition just before the big bang. Then they say, the Prakriti evolves partially and the first stage of evolution is called mahat tatvam. Prakriti, 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 pravrthi; 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 nivrithi, one is running towards, another is running away. So pravrithi-nivrithi-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.

Nivrithi
and Pravrithi: 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

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

Bagawad Gita, Class 165: Chapter 13, Verses 1 & 2

Continuing his teachings Swamiji said, in last class I said, Ch. 12 ends the Madhyama Shatakam of the Gita. Gita has three Shatakams. Shatakam means group of six, in this case group of six chapters. Thus, we have three Shatakams in Gita. In each Shatakam, certain topics are highlighted.

Prathama Shatakam:

includes Chapters 1-6. It highlights:

- 1) Jivaswarupam or the Tvam in the saying Tat Tvam Asi; Jiva is the Tvam.
- 2) Karma yoga; importance of individual effort or Prayatna is pointed out. Sri Krishna points out that, everything is not willed by God; you also have free will; so, fatalism is not encouraged. Fatalism means, fate alone

contributes in our lives. Vedic approach is that fate is just one of the contributors of our future; in addition to fate, another important factor is free will or prayatna.

So one has to contribute one's effort; one has to work for one's uplift; or as the Tamil saying goes: Taan Padi, Daivam padi.

Madhyama Shatakam:

Chapters 7-12: Here topics highlighted are:

1) Ishwara swarupam

or the Tat in Tat Tvam Asi; also called Tat Padarthaha.

2) Ishwara upasana

yoga; this can be as Ishta devata upasana also called abhyasa yoga; and Vishwa

Rupa upasana; Meditation

upon the Lord, looking upon him as the very universe itself.

In fact, the

entire 11th chapter is training for Vishva rupa upasanam.

3) Ishwara Kripa or

Ishwara anugraha.

While human effort is

important, it fructifies only with Ishwara Kripa. And of course, Ishvara anugrah is always

there, flowing, but we have to learn to tap the Ishvara anugraha, which is there just

as a waterfall has got electricity in potential form, but the electricity will

be useful to us only when we learn to tap the electricity by the appropriate

project. Similarly, solar energy is there all the time, but we have to tap that

energy. Similarly, Ishvara

anugrah also, we have to learn to tap and **every prayer is like a hydroelectric project, it is Ishvara anugrah project.** In fact, we start the Bhagavat Gita with a prayer; it is only to tap anugrah. And therefore, never underestimate the role of anugrah. Generally people think advaitins who are committed to dhyana yoga do not have bhakthi at all, they think, they are all intellectuals, they are rational people, they think. But remember even the greatest advaitin, values the role of Ishvara anugrah and therefore Ishvarakripa or anugrah is the third topic in the madhyama shatkam. So, three topics are covered: Ishvara svarupam, Ishvara dhyanam, and Ishvara anugrah.

Charama Shatakam:

Chapters 13-18

Now we are entering the Charama shatakam of the Gita. Three topics highlighted here are:

1) Jiva Ishwara Swarupa aikyam: The essential oneness of Jiva svarupam and Ishvara svarupam, which is technically called Asi padarthaha. In the saying, Tat Tvam Asi, if you rearrange it becomes, Tvam Tat Asi; here Tvam is Jiva svarupam, Tat is Ishvara Svarupam and Asi is Jiva Ishwara svarupa aikyam. And by using the word essential oneness, we indirectly convey that there is a superficial difference between Jiva and Ishvara. And that is why we are using the word essential oneness and to understand this essential oneness, we generally take the example of a wave and the ocean. Wave and ocean are superficially different, that is why it is called a wave, and ocean is called an ocean. Definitely there is a difference. Ocean is vast, while wave is small; Ocean is cause, wave is

effect; ocean is relatively eternal, wave is ephemeral. Thus, between wave and ocean, differences do exist, but all these differences are only superficial differences. If you find out the essential nature of wave, it is nothing but Water. If you take the wave, it is nothing but water, H₂O, Satchidananda. Similarly if you analyze the essential nature of ocean, it is nothing but water alone. In fact there is no wave other than water, there is no ocean other than water, there is only one water behind the wave and one water behind the ocean and if you shift your attention to the water aspect, if you shift your focus to the water, then you can say wave and ocean are essentially one and the same. Similarly, Vedanta says, Jivatma is essentially atma. That is why it is called Jivatma. Jivatma is essentially the atma, the chaitanyam. Paramatma is essentially the atma, the chaitanyam. Even though superficially they are different; essentially both are one and the same atma, the chaitanyam alone. This understanding, by proper enquiry, is called Jivatma paramatma svarupa aikyam; otherwise called Asi padarthah. This is topic No.1 of the Charama Shatkam.

2) Gyana yoga: Then the second topic is Gyana yoga, that is a sadhana meant to discover this essential oneness, known as Aham Brahma Asi. Imagine the wave is a living being and the wave says that I am nothing but water. And the moment the wave understands I am water, the wave can say I do not have birth, because water does not have birth, I do not have death, and I am all pervading throughout the ocean. And this discovery is Aham Brahma Asmi, which is gathered through Gyana Yogah. Gyana yoga is process of understanding this Mahavakyam; in English we call it the great equation. So the concept of equation is very beautiful. When do we have an equation?

When two things are totally different we can write an equation. When two things are explicitly equal there is no need for an equation. But when two things

are seemingly different but essentially one, then equation is useful.

Thus: $4+3=9-2=7$.

While both sides appear different; one has a plus sign while other has a minus sign; our eyes show them as different. But difference is superficial and both are "Seven" swarupam.

Similarly, when you look at the Jiva, and when you look at the Ishvara, they are very different. One is omniscient; another does not even know the spelling of Omniscient. Sarvajnah, alpajnah; Sarvashaktiman, Alpashaktiman. Sarvajnah means omniscient. Alpajnah means with limited knowledge. Sarvashaktiman means Omnipotent and Alpashaktiman means with limited power. Sarvagathah means omnipresent and Alphagathah means limited pervasion. So Jiva and Ishvara seem to be totally different; even different is not the word, diagonally opposite. One is creator, the other is created; one is master, another is servant. But the Upanishads say that the difference is only superficial like $4+3$ and $9-2$. If you make an enquiry and arrive at the essence of Jivatma, and also arrive at the essence of paramatma or Ishvara it is called Tvam pada sodanam, and Tat pada sodanam respectively; sodanam means vicharah. You do Jiva svarupa vichara and Ishvara svarupa vichara on the lines taught by the teacher. Just as the mathematics teacher drives home the equation to the student. Similarly, Mahavakya upadesha karta guru has to help the student enquire into the Jiva svarupa vichara and Ishvara svarupa vichara. Then the thrilling discovery is Aham Brahma asmi. And this is called Jivatama-paramatma aikyam. Otherwise called Asi padarthah. And this enquiry that you make to arrive at the oneness is called Gyana yoga; otherwise called Vedanta sravana manana nidhidhyasana. This topic is elaborated upon in Chapters 13, 14, and 15.

3. **Satguna** or importance of values. Noble

virtues are important to absorb the teaching. Only a dharmic mind can absorb Vedanta. If mind is not dharmic, it is not prepared for Vedanta and teaching will not enter the mind. So, one has to prepare the mind. These are the virtues enumerated by Sri Krishna in chapters 13, 14, 15,16 and 17. In Dharma shastra these virtues are called Atma Guna or we also call it Sadhana chatushtaya sampati.

Now we enter chapter 13.

In this chapter, in some Gita books there are 35 shlokas and in some 34. The chapter starts with a question from Arjuna. This question is not shown in some books, hence 34 shlokas in the chapter. We will, however, discuss Arjuna's shloka as well.

Shloka # 1:

13.1 Arjuna said I wish to learn about Nature (matter) and the Spirit (soul), the field and the knower of the field, knowledge and that which ought to be known, O Kesava.

Arjuna's question: In this shloka six technical words are used; one can even call them technical jargons; like the word inflation used in economics is different from inflating a tire. So, Arjuna asks for clarification of these six terms. The terms are: 1. Prakriti; 2. Purusha;3. Kshetram; 4. Kshetragya; 5. Gyanam and; 6. Gneyam. Usually Prakriti and Purusha are paired; Kshetram and Kshetragya are paired;

and Gyanam and
Gneyam are paired.

Prakriti and Kshtram:

mean material universe or experienced objective material universe.

Even though there are subtle differences, at this moment, we can take them as almost identical. And when I say material universe, it includes the invisible energies also, because even scientifically energy is another form of matter only. Matter can be converted into energy and energy can be converted into matter; that is why we have $e = mc^2$ equation. Therefore, when I say this matter, it means the whole creation, in visible and in invisible form. And according to Vedanta, it includes our mind also, because according to shastra, mind is also a product of the subtle five elements. Therefore mind is also a form of matter only and that is why matter influences the mind. When there is a change in biochemistry, when there is a change in hormones, it changes your mind and emotions; from that it is very clear that mind is also another form of subtle matter. Therefore, prakrti or kshetram includes the world, the mind and also the body; all of them are called prakrti or kshetram. Sri Krishna will himself elaborate on that later. Here for our convenience we can remember them as matter.

Purusha, Kshetragya and Gneyam, all three are synonymous. All three mean consciousness principle or chaitanyam or chetana tatvam.

Gyanam, the popular meaning is knowledge. In Chapter 13, however, it means Satguna's and there are 20 of these virtues. These are topics Arjuna wants to know about. So Sri Krishna answers Arjuna's question.

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'.

Sri Krishna answers.

When we write an answer to a question, we answer the ones we know first and keep doubtful ones to the end. Sri Krishna answered Arjuna in a different order from the one in question. Even though Arjuna's order was, Prakrti, Purusha, Kshetram, Kshetrajna, Sri Krishna starts with the third item, Kshetram.

Kshetram: O Kaunteya, this body that you experience so intimately, is called Kshetram. Why use word Kshetram? Shankaracharya gives several meanings for the word kshetram; Out of that we will see two meanings, which are relevant and beautiful.

First meaning is, that which is subject to decay and destruction; that which disintegrates, that which decays and ultimately dies. In fact, the very word shariram also means the same only; that which is decaying every moment.

All the words used for the physical body indicates that it is decay and destruction. And even the word deha, is because that which is burned by, afflicted by, tormented by three-fold sorrows; it also means to burn, not in the physical sense, but in the figurative sense.

What are the three-fold tapas. One tapa is rising from inside in the form of varieties of diseases etc. that is, it is internal. And the other type of tapa, are coming from the outside or the environment, like dust pollution, noise pollution, carbon monoxide pollution, any tapam coming from the surrounding is one type of suffering; What comes from inside is adhyatmica tapam; like BP, sugar, etc. And the third one is that which is not caused by external or internal, that which is caused by the nature or the karma.

Supernatural

forces like thunder, lightening or floods cause Adhi daivika tapam; all these things are the third ones.

Through

these three fold tapas

the body is constantly tormented. And while living the three fold tapas are

burning, and after death also, the body is burned, by another type of fire

called fire of cremation.

Therefore

while living also it is burned, after death also it is burned therefore it is

called kshetram. This is

meaning No.1 given by Shankaracharya.

3) Agricultural land

is also called Kshetram. Physical body is compared to a field.

We can convert

seed to plant by sowing seed on land; similarly we have performed punyam and

papam karmas in past lives. They are like seeds that fructify into Phalam.

Their conversion requires a medium and medium is the physical body. Only

through body can we reap punya and papa Phalam. Therefore Shankaracharya says,
Kshetravat Kshetram.

In kshetram there are two more ideas to keep in mind; the mind is also kshetram; external world is also kshetram. Whatever you experience is kshetram. The world is experienced by me; the body is experienced by me. Do you have any doubts? When the mosquito bites, you will know whether you experience the body or not. The body, pain and pleasures are experienced; the world is experienced. In the same way I experience the mind intimately. I know the arrival of every emotion and I know their departure. I know the emotional problems. That's why counselors are having a gala time. So, therefore, all the three are objects of experience and all of them are matter, made up of matter; world is made up of matter; body is of course made up of matter; mind also is made up of matter. All the three are objects. All the three are matter. And then all the three are subject to constant change also. The world changes all the time. There is nothing that is changeless. Some of them may change faster. Some of them may change slowly, but the change is the law of nature.

Therefore
the world is savikaram,
body is savikaram. What about
the mind, it is the fastest changing thing; Thank God the mind changes. I keep
on talking and your mind remains still. What use. Nothing happens in the mind. What
a terrible lot will be mine? So I am expecting my words to enter your mind,

Thus,
kshetram is object; kshetram is matter. kshetram is subject to change.

Even though kshetram consists of body and world, Sri Krishna

here focuses upon the body only, because we have got maximum attachment to the body matter. World is also matter; body is also another lump of matter. Even though the world is also mud, body is also mud, unfortunately, our identification with this body is so deep and therefore Sri Krishna wants to specifically remind that the body is also an object of experience. So topic No.1 is temporarily over. Sri Krishna will elaborate later.

Then the second topic is Kshetrangyaha; whatever illumines or experiences the kshetram. If the kshetram is an experienced object, every experienced object presupposes an experiencer, a sentient subject. If my eyes are perceiving all of you, the very perception of every one of you pre-supposes the existence of the perceiver, the I. Even though the eyes themselves are not perceived by me; I do not see my eyes, even though the eyes themselves are not perceived; there is no doubt regarding the perceiver eyes, because without the perceiver eyes, there cannot be perceived forms and colors. Like every photograph that you see pre-supposes a photographer or at minimum a camera.

Every

photo presupposes a camera, even though the camera is not in the picture.

Similarly the entire kshetram consisting of the world, body and mind is an object of experience, it presupposes a sentient, experiencer, illuminator, conscious principle. And that conscious principle is called the subject, which is called the illuminator, the enlivening principle, and Sri Krishna calls it Kshetragna.

Taking an aside, what

is nature of consciousness? All are struggling to understand this

consciousness. As per Vedanta, consciousness has following

features:

1. It is not part, product or property of this body. It is an independent entity.
2. It pervades inert body and makes it sentient.
3. It is not limited by boundary of body.
4. It will exist even when body perishes; thus it is eternal.
5. The surviving consciousness after death, is not recognizable, as there is no body through which it can manifest itself.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawad Gita, Class 164: Chapter 12 Summary

Continuing

his teaching Swamiji said, today I will give you a summary of the chapter 12.

It is culmination of mid-section of the Gita, the madhyama shatakam. First six chapters were called prathama shatakam, 7-12 as Madhyama shatakam and 13-18 as charama shatakam.

In

Chapters 7-11, Sri Krishna talked about Ishwara swarupam. Chapters 1-6, he

discussed Jiva Swarupam. Ishwara swarupam culminates in Bhakti, which is love and devotion to Ishwara. Love is possible only towards someone you know. You can never have a positive or negative emotion towards an unknown person. When you meet an unknown person; your attitude is a neutral; only when you move with the person and come to know more and more about that person you develop either liking towards the person or dislike.

This is process of falling in love. The more the contact is, more one comes to know and this develops an attitude of love. This happens with God as well. I can't love an unknown God. One cannot command one to love. I have to give knowledge and that can create a healthy attitude. Citing example of love for country,

If I want you to develop love towards the country; I have to talk about the glory of the country. You may ask is there any glory at all; that is a different thing; I can never hold an attitude. An attitude is not command-based; an attitude is not will based; an attitude is generated based on your understanding; and Sri Krishna knows this principle. In five chapters Sri Krishna devoted time to giving you the knowledge of God; and now that we know what that God will be; the consequence of that will be a healthy attitude towards the Lord; and that attitude is called bhakthi.

Therefore Ch.12 is natural culmination of previous five chapters. Although a short chapter of 20 shlokas it is a very important chapter. In this chapter, the entire

Vedic teaching has been encapsulated; that is Veda Purva and Veda anta; or it is Veda Sara. Therefore at end of chapter Sri Krishna says it is Veda Sara or Dharmayam.

This chapter has two topics: 1) Bhakti Yoga and 2) Bhakti Yoga Phalam.

But before entering the two topics Sri Krishna answers a question posed by Arjuna.

In previous chapter, Ch. 11, Sri Krishna talked about Saguna Ishwara or Vishwa Rupa Ishwara. Here the world is full of Gunas and hence Saguna. Arjuna had heard of Nirguna Ishwara, so he has a question: between Saguna and Nirguna Ishwara, which bhakti is superior? Generally we are attracted to Saguna as we can't experience or conceive of Nirguna Ishwara. So question is, which dhyanam is better?

Sri Krishna gives a peculiar answer. Implication of the answer is not to ask irrelevant questions. He implies that there is no choice. Every seeker requires Saguna bhakti and eventually nirguna Ishwara bhakti as well. Saguna bhakti is the stepping-stone to nirguna dhyanam. Without Nirguna Dhyanam, Saguna dhyanam is incomplete.

One can postpone nirguna dhyanam but one has to come to nirguna, because

nirguna Ishvara is the ultimate reality, which is based on the well-known Keno Upanishad saying: Saguna Ishvara that you meditate upon is never the ultimate reality. You should remember the ultimate reality is a saguna object of meditation. And therefore Krishna's answer is that everybody has to go through both saguna and nirguna bhakti.

Sri

Krishna then he enters bhakti yoga sadhana and its phalam.

Bhakti

yoga is not a particular sadhana but a range of sadhanas and it consist of several levels. In this chapter it is presented as having five stages.

Each

stage is important before going to next one.

First

stage:

Sakama

karma phala karma yoga: Anyone can start in this path. Any karma can be

performed to fulfill one's desires. We bring a lot of desires, from our

previous lives; some are unfulfilled ones. So let initial life be Yoga Kshema

Pradhana. Once I obtain my desire I now need to maintain it.

How to convert to Karma

yoga? Learn to accept consequences of actions as God's ashirvadam.

Second

stage:

As

a person matures, he realizes that he needs to transfer some of his yoga kshema to Lord.

It

is an important skill that we have to develop; we have to learn to transfer a part of our yoga kshema concern to the Lord. Only then, we will have time, that too quality time and relaxed mind for another set of activity which is meant for chitta shuddhi.

Therefore

the second stage of karma yoga is involvement in those activities, which are meant for chitta shuddhi. **These we call chitta shuddhi pradhana karma, or nishkama karma pradhana karma yoga.** So we do have time to pray to the Lord for the child's examination as well as for giving me chitta shuddhi.

So in this, I do not ask for yoga; I do not ask for kshema; O Lord whatever you give; I would learn to live with that; And whatever stays with me, I will learn to live with it. It is a very difficult stage; but we have to come to that.

Third

stage:

Ishta

Devata Upasana. In first stage of bhakti, I could not even sit down in meditation. But here, in third stage, forgetting samsara and its activities one prays to God. Here mind turns inwards and it is called Abhyasa Yogaha. Ishta

Devata can be any god in any form.

Fourth

Stage:

And once a person has gone through this stage; then he is ready for the fourth stage; I said before in the ishta devatha upasanam; there are advantages; but there are limitations as well and problem is that you may think that there are so many Gods and you may begin to compare; is Shiva greater or Vishnu; idea of division etc. arises; and also the Lord or the deity that I visualize is bound by time and space; that is also another limitation and therefore to break these limitations; I have to learn to look at the Ishta devatha as the very Vishva rupa Ishvara. Visha Rupa Dhyanam gives us chitta shudhi.

Fifth

stage:

After

four stages one becomes sadhana chatushtatya sampan; for it's meaning, I suggest you refer to tatva bodha. It means one has the required mental preparedness for self-knowledge. This is Gyana Yoga, the final stage of bhakti yoga. Shankaracharya says final level of bhakti is self-enquiry.

It

consists of Sravanam, mananam and nidhidhyasanam, for a length of time, on Vedantic scriptures, under a qualified Guru.

So

sravanam is the consistent and systematic study of vedantic scriptures; not puranas.

Vedantic scriptures are one's which deal with nirguna Ishvaraha. The first four stages you could manage with saguna Ishvara; in the fifth level you have to come to nirguna Ishvara, which is discussed only in the Vedanta. Therefore, consistent and systematic study of Vedantic scriptures for a length of time, under the guidance of a competent acharya are required.

Sri

Krishna himself has said so in the 4th chapter,

Arjuna you have to necessarily go to a guru, and open yourselves and ask for this teaching and consistently follow the sravanam. But what about those people who never had a guru?

Here we are talking about the general rules; but for every general rule there are exceptions, because there are spiritual geniuses. In the case of spiritual genius, a guru is not required; therefore in their case, they gain knowledge in an exceptional way; just as there was Ramanujan, a mathematic genius; he could master mathematics without the help of a teacher.

When we are talking about general rule; never quote an exception; and every one requires a guru;

Therefore

sravanam from guru is required.

Then comes the mananam; which is the removal of all the doubts; until my intellect is convinced that the nirguna ishvara is not different from me; the real me; aham brahmasmi. Our intellect will not easily accept it; until we accept, we have to find out what is the intellectual obstacle for accepting this; and whatever be the obstacle in the form of doubt, we have to remove it. It is a long process, we have to go through; which is called mananam; and once a person has

gone through sravanam and mananam, he has to go through nidhidhyasanam; by which we mean the assimilation of this teaching; by which we mean repeatedly reminding my higher nature to myself. **Normally, the nature I now know is the lower nature; that I am so and so; born on such and such a date and time; with following qualification; so many years old; whatever your bio-data I give now; they all belong to the incidental ahamkara. I have to remind myself of my higher atma nature; this self-reminder is called Nidhidhyasanam.**

Thus

by following sravanam;

mananam and nidhidhyasanam;

I assimilate this teaching. And once the teaching is assimilated; this intellectual

knowledge will bring about an emotional transformation.

Because most of our

problems are at emotional level; thus we have raga; dvesha; kama; krodha

and bhayam; all these are emotional problems.

Samsara is

experienced at emotional levels; and therefore this knowledge has to transform

my emotional personality. Until then, I continue nidhidhyasanam. And these

three sadhanas put together

sravanam manana

nidhidhyasana is called

the fifth level of Gyana yoga.

Now

the first four stages belong to Veda Purva.

The

fifth stage belongs to Veda anta. Now, these five stages are not clear cut. All

sadhanas may be followed with one predominating at a given

time.

Shlokas

13-19: Bhakti Yoga Phalam:

When

one goes through all five stages of bhakti yoga, one gets the Atma Gyanam that

Aham Brahma asmi and Aham Purnaha asmi. Any knowledge removes ignorance. Thus physics knowledge removes physics ignorance. Self-knowledge removes self-ignorance.

Gaining of knowledge is experienced at intellectual level while emotional

benefits are a corollary. How does removal of ignorance give emotional benefits?

The connection is not direct.

Vedanta

points out that, purnatavam is our real nature. But, unfortunately, we don't know

this fact, as we are born with ignorance. As we learn more, ignorance goes

away. This is true for self-ignorance, as well. When I don't know I am purnaha,

I will mistake myself as Apurnaha. Agyanam leads to erroneous conclusion that I

am an incomplete person at the intellectual level.

When

I feel I am incomplete, I have desire to become complete. So I struggle to

become complete; thus, as a child, I think getting that balloon will complete

me. As an adult, I feel, a wife will complete me and so on. Therefore, I go

on thinking this will complete me; this will complete me; this will complete me;

and the whole life is spent searching for something, which will make my life complete.

This

searching is called Kama. This causes emotional problems; this then shifts

problem from intellect to emotion. This causes Krodha, when the desire is unfulfilled;

and if it does get fulfilled, it then leads to Lobha, more desire, which again

leads to Kama. Thus we are trapped in kama-krodha, moha-mada, matsarya cycle.

In fact all

your emotional problems begin with this kama. And this kama comes up because of the erroneous conclusion that I am apurna.

Kama rises due

to erroneous feeling that I am incomplete at the intellectual level but it

manifests itself at emotional level.

Therefore

the root of the problem is at intellectual level; **though the problem is emotional; but the root is intellectual; and**

therefore you have to study the scriptures and solve the problem at

intellectual level; then it will gradually transform your emotional

personality; since I am purnah; I know; I am

full and complete; whether things are around or not.

Expectations

are not there; frustrations are not there; complaints are not there; and therefore

all the benefits mentioned in this portion are the emotional benefits; but the

cause is at the intellectual knowledge. And therefore Sri

Krishna enumerates them
from shloka No.13 to 19. I am not going to each sloka; but
will
present in a nutshell;

All
our transactions are from three different levels.

I, as a karta in the world; as the doer of varieties of
action; that is one role I play; and the second role I play is
as a bhokta; receiving varieties of experiences; and the third
is **I, as a pramatha**; how I look at the world; my perspective
as an observer; And Sri Krishna says at all these three
levels; there will be total transformation.

As
a karta; the
transformation is that my actions are no more born out of a
sense of
incompleteness; It is not because I am apurna; I am doing the
action with knowledge
I am purna; Therefore
all my actions are not meant for fulfillment; but they are
done with fulfillment;
and therefore, there is no more any motive; karma phalam if it
comes; aham purna; desired karma
phalam if it does not come; aham purna; Therefore there is a
very great
relief; there is no concern; there is no tension. So,
therefore, I act from purnatvam; not from
apurnatvam; **this is first transformation.**

And
when I am full and complete; a mind, which has fullness, will
always express
only love. Fullness expresses in the form of love and
compassion. Therefore all
the actions are born out of love and compassion for others.

This is the second transformation.

And

the third transformation is since the action come from love, compassion without expectation and concern; the quality of the actions are excellent; because the mind is undisturbed; the performance is always better; And therefore every action is appropriate and sound action;

Thus, as a karta; his motive is not fulfillment; it comes with fulfillment; love, compassion.

Similarly

as a bhokta

Sri Krishna

says: Since he operates from strength that aham purna asmi, he is not vulnerable to disturbances like anger; impulsive reactions etc.; they cannot come; He has got a shock absorber. And, therefore, patience, freedom from impulsive reaction; not being vulnerable to emotional disturbances are all benefits he gets. In fact, he is an emotionally immunized person as a bhokta; So emotional resistance is the second benefit.

And

the third and final is as a pramatha; as an observer his perspective of the creation is samatvam. Samatvam: whatever be the type of his experience; maana apamana, sukha, dukha; sheetha ushna etc. his mind enjoys samatvam or equanimity which means he is not subject to raga and dvesha. So these are the transformations, which will take place as a result of this knowledge; and Sri Krishna concludes by

pointing that to obtain these benefits, there is no shortcut, everyone has to go through all the five stages.

One has to go through all the five stages to attain this phalam called jeevan mukthi.

Take away:

Gyani Bhakta, since his actions come from love, compassion without expectation and concern; the quality of the actions are excellent; because the mind is undisturbed; the performance is always better; And therefore every action is appropriate and sound action.

Source of all problems, Kama:

In fact all your emotional problems begin with this kama. And this kama comes up because of the erroneous conclusion that I am apurna.

Kama rises due to erroneous feeling that I am incomplete at the intellectual level but it manifests itself at emotional level.

Why study scriptures?

Although our problems are emotional; their root is intellectual; and therefore you have

to study the scriptures and solve the problem at intellectual level; then it will gradually transform your emotional personality.

Nidhidhyasanam:

Normally,
the nature I now know is the lower

nature;

that I am so and so; born on such and such a date and time;
with following

qualification; so many years old; whatever your bio-data I
give now; they all

belong to the incidental ahamkara. I have to remind myself
of my higher atma

nature; this self-reminder is called Nidhidhyasanam.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy