

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 173 – Chapter 13 Verses 16 and 17

In this 13th chapter, Arjuna asked for clarification of six concepts:

1. Prakriti
2. Purusha,
3. kṣetram,
4. *kṣetrajña*
5. jñeyam
6. jñānam

Krishna now addresses jñeyam or Brahman in verses 13 through 19th. In this context jñeyam means param brahman. Jñeyam, Brahman is the ultimate truth everyone should know.

Krishna is revealing Brahman as pure existence. Existence and consciousness are two subtle concepts which have different meanings than what we usually we think of. According to vedanta, existence is the unique and all principles we talked about consciousness can be extended to existence. All these five principles must be extended to existence also because existence is same as consciousness.

1. Existence is not a part, product, or property of the body of any object.
2. Existence is an independent entity and is the ultimate substance, which pervades the body and makes it existent.
3. Existence extends beyond the body or object.
4. Existence survives the fall of the body or object.
5. The surviving Existence is not recognizable, not because it is not there, but because of the absence of

reflecting or manifesting medium.

This pure existence is pure consciousness, that pure consciousness is Brahman, and that pure consciousness is you – Tat Tvam Asi. Pure existence can never be understood – it can only be understood along with an object. Similar to when you ask for water, it is understood that a cup is needed to transport water.

The existence's manifestation is recognized through every sense organ. In and through every sensory perception, existence is recognized. At the same time, the existence or Brahman is free from all the sense organs; they are not intrinsic nature of Brahman. Similar to hand being not part of light. You appreciate the world through existence, but world is not a part of Brahman. This existence Brahman supports everything, because of Brahman alone every object enjoy existence. Brahman is free from all the objects of the world.

Existence is associated with every object, but not affected by any objects. Similar to all characters of a movie are associated with the screen, but the screen is not affected by the characters of the movie. Brahman is nirgunam.

Verse 16

*It is outside and inside beings. It is unmoving and moving.
It is far and near. Being subtle, it is unknowable.*

The existence Brahman is both inside outside the body and objects, similar to the light is upon the hand as well as outside the hand in unmanifested form. Consciousness is in this body; consciousness is other bodies and consciousness is also in between the bodies. You can never think of absence of existence anywhere.

It is moving and it is nonmoving. It is really non-moving,

but it is seemingly moving when the medium moves. Moving property of an object is transferred to existence. For example, the rotation of the earth is attributed to the sun, and we say sun rises and sets, but the sun does not rise and set.

For a wise person, Brahman is the nearest – is one with me. For an ignorant person, Brahman is far away, because he continues the search for Brahman. If Brahman is everywhere, why don't I recognize that Brahman? Even though Brahman is everywhere, Brahman is free from attribute, and we can't recognize an object if it does not have any attribute. Attributes alone help me recognize. We recognize objects by color, form etc. The less the number of attributes an object has, the more incomprehensible the object is.

- Prithivi is the grossest thing we can recognize – it has all five attributes – smell, taste, sound, touch, and form.
- Water does not have the attribute of smell, but has the other four – taste, sound, touch and form.
- Agni has three attributes – sound, touch and form, but does not have the attributes of smell and taste.
- Vayu has two attributes, sound and touch and not form, smell and taste.
- Akasa has only one attribute – sound, the echo capacity.

Verse 17

Moreover, it remains undivided. Yet it appears as if divided in beings. That Brahman is the creator, the destroyer, and the sustainer of all beings.

Brahman is indivisible, like space which can't be divided. At the same time, it is seemingly divided. It is in every body, but also in between the bodies.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 172 – Chapter 13 Verses 14 and 15

From the 13th verse to 19th verse, Lord Krishna is introducing the fourth topic, jñeyam. The word jñeyam means that it is to be known by everyone, the ultimate truth of the universe. Every human being wants immortality; therefore, everyone should know this truth. This is brahma vidya.

Verse 14

It has hands and legs everywhere. It has eyes, heads, and mouths everywhere. It has ears everywhere. It remains pervading everything in the world.

In the Upanishads, brahman is defined as basic essence, the ultimate content of the universe. All the sciences are also trying to find out the ultimate substance of the universe. Initially, they thought that the whole universe is made up of combinations of elements. Then they arrived at molecules; thereafter they said that all the molecules are made up atoms and the whole universe is invisible atoms in motion, creating a visible universe. Thereafter, the scientists broke the atoms into particles and that was the ultimate substance. Then they divided the particles, and they thought the energy is the ultimate substance of the universe. As you go deeper, the visible becomes invisible, tangible becomes intangible; concrete becomes abstract. Scientists have not yet arrived at the final answer. But Vedanta has arrived at Brahman as the ultimate substance of the creation; being the ultimate substance, Brahman will be abstract, intangible, invisible with no form, sound, smell etc. Therefore, understanding Brahman will be difficult because it is not available for

touching, smelling, or seeing.

We see lot of substances in the world like “a tall man”. We use a noun and an adjective to describe a substance. Adjectives reveal the property of an object. Nouns reveal the substance. Let us take the example of a golden bangle or a wooden chair. Bangle is noun and golden is adjective. The word golden does not refer to the property but the very substance of the bangle. Gold is the substance of the bangle. In this case, adjective reveals a substance but not a property. In the example of a tall person, tall reveals a property. An adjective can reveal either a property or a substance. Bangle is a noun, but it does not reveal a substance, because there is no substance called bangle. There is only a substance called gold. Then what does the word bangle refer to? When the gold is in a particular form or shape, then that shape alone is called bangle. Bangle is only the form or shape of the substance; the name of the substance is gold. Bangle is the name of the form only and the form is changed when the gold is melted. Adjectives reveal property or substance. Nouns can reveal adjectives or property. Examples:

- Adjective revealing Property: Tall
- Adjective revealing Substance: Golden; wooden.
- Noun revealing Substance: Tree
- Noun revealing the property: Bangle, chair.

When I experience the world, for example, there is a wall. The verb “is” points to existence. Examples are there is a tree, there is a man. Everything you experience in the world is an existent object. If anything is non-existent, then we will not experience it.

What is the noun and adjective in the sentence “there is a man”. The word existent is adjective and man is the noun. What type of adjective and noun it is? An adjective can

reveal a substance or property; The word existent adjective reveals the property or the substance? Until we come to Vedanta, our conclusion is that the world is the substance and the word existent is an attribute or property. Vedanta says that is the work of Maya. Maya makes you commit a big mistake of making you think that the existent adjective is not revealing the attribute, but the substance or according to Vedanta, Sat Brahma. Existence is the fundamental, absolute substance and as a result is invisible, intangible and abstract, without form or any other property.

If the adjective reveals a substance, according to Vedanta, every noun reveal a property; bangle is not the substance, but the shape of the gold, substance is gold. The whole world is not a substance at all but a different name and form. Existence is the only substance. When you are experiencing different objects, you are experiencing the fundamental substance; when you are experiencing a chair, you are experiencing the wood. So, when you experience world, you are experiencing the basic substance, existence, Brahman.

You are experiencing the basic substance, the existent with different name and form; existent is never experienced in pure form, but only with a name and form through my sense organs. Sense organs are equipped to experience only substances with properties – shape, name, smell, taste etc. How can I experience pure existence? When you remove all the name and form, what is left behind is pure existence. But the sense organs can never experience the pure existence. To experience the ultimate substance, close all your sense organs, what is left behind is basic substances which is pure existent. How do you experience the pure existent without any sense organs? You can never experience pure existent because it is not an object of experience. Then how do I know it is there? It is you, the witnessing consciousness. Pure existence is nothing but pure consciousness and that is me, the existent consciousness.

The example given in the Upanishads is dream experience. A dream is capable of frightening you, but when you are in dream, you are the essence of the dream world, the dream world is resting on you and on waking up the dream will go away, When you are in dream, it is very difficult to accept that. But when you wake up, the dream world will not exist. It is difficult to accept that the dreamer is the substance. During the dream it is difficult to accept that I am the dreamer. Similarly, it is difficult to accept that I am the substance of the world. That "I" is Brahman and that Brahman is existent and that Brahman alone appears with different nama roopa. Just as gold is inherent in all ornaments, existent is inherent in all objects. If an object does not have existence, it is a non-existent object.

Verse 15

It is manifested through the functions of all organs. Yet it is free from all organs. It sustains everything. Yet is unattached. It is the experiencer of gunas. Yet it is free from gunas.

All the sense organs reveal Brahman all the time. Eyes can reveal only color, but not sound. Ears can only reveal sound but not color. All the sense organs experience one thing in common, that is existence. They all reveal uniformly Brahman. But we are attracted by nama roopa and lose sight of the inherent existent substance, Brahman. But due to the mixing up of nama roopa, we miss the substance.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 171 –

Chapter 13 Verses 12 and 13

Lord Krishna is dealing with the topic of jñānam from verses 8 to 12. In this context jñānam means all the virtues of mind which are conducive to the attainment of knowledge. In the 11th verse, Lord Krishna emphasizes the importance of Bhakti. Jñānam is only possible with the bhakti. Karma yoga, upasana yoga and jñāna yoga all are bhakti yoga. When Krishna prescribes bhakti as a necessity, it is not jñāna bhakti as this is a sadhana to become a jnani. Artha bhakti is only conducive for worldly goals. Here the goal is God and not a means to worldly end. So, this bhakti can only be jigyasu bhakti. We should have the maturity enough to know that everything other than God is perishable and God alone can give me security and completeness. This devotion to God must be undivided. Even when the worldly transactions are going on, this devotee must remember that the purpose of life is poornatvam.

The next virtues are.

1. Viviktha desa sevitvam: Resorting to a secluded place; resorting to solitude; this is also expression of samsara; Developing a habit of going to a secular place of solitude and find out whether I can confront myself. One version of samsara is the fear of solitude or loneliness. This is the other purpose of this solitude is to face loneliness. This will also help to gracefully handle old age.
2. Tattva jñānam artha darshanam: Knowing value for Jñānam; knowing the benefit or the value of Jñānam. We should know what we will get out of this knowledge. Regularly remind us that jñānam gives inner peace and inner freedom.
3. Adhyatma Jñāna nithyātvam: Systematic and consistent study of Vedantic scriptures for a length of time under

the guidance of a competent acharya. Without systematic study, we will get only a few ideas. The word sravanam presupposes study of the scriptures under a competent acharya. This guru should deal only with sastra. All other virtues prepare the student and this virtue provides the knowledge.

These 20 virtues together with satvic study will lead to gyanam. Opposite of all these virtues is ajñānam. Negative virtues will solidify ignorance.

Verse 13:

I shall teach you that which is to be known, upon knowing which one attains immortality. It is the supreme Brahman which is beginning less. It is said to be neither an effect nor a cause

Arjuna wanted to know about six topics. Now Krishan takes up the topic of Jñeyam in verse 13 to 19. Jñeyam is same as kṣetram. This subject matter everyone should know because this solves the fundamental and universal problem of insecurity that every human being suffers. The ultimate thing to be known is brahman. Brahman is free from three limitations:

1. Space limitation (can only be in one place),
2. Time Limitation. We have a date of birth and date of death.
3. Attribute limitation. Presence of one attribute, excludes all other attributes; One color excludes all other colors.

Brahman is free from all the three limitations; Any cause is in potential form, but it is not available for use, so it is as though does not exist, and it is called asat. Everything we see and experience is the result of cause-and-effect flow. The difference between kariyam and karanam is time.

Brahman is beyond time, space and attribute and is beyond the realm of cause and effect.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 170 – Chapter 13 Verses 8 to 12

In verses 8 to 12, Lord Krishna is dealing with jñānam. Jñānam is a set of virtues that indicate the level of mental health. This mental health is useful to enjoy a peaceful mind and is required for a vedantic student. If the mind is not healthy, the intellect will be a hostage of sick mind. A disturbed mind will suppress intellect. Mind is healthy when these virtues are followed.

1. Vairāgyam: Mastery of sense organs. Mastering Jñānendriyani, which receives input from the world and mastering Karmendriyani which transact with the world.
2. Indriyasthesu; Mastery form sense objects. Controlling sense organs requires being alert all the time because these sense organs come in contact with sense objects on a regular basis and these sense organs develop attachment to sense objects. You are allowed to enjoy pleasures without becoming a slave to those pleasures.
3. Anahangarah: Freedom from arrogance, vanity, pride; humility; Different than amanithyam; Amanithyam is freedom at the thought level; Anahangara is freedom at the verbal level; Adhambithvam is at physical level.
4. Don't be body-oriented life: This will lead to sorrow related to pain in birth, old age, disease and death. This doesn't mean neglecting the body, but remembering it is only an instrument. Constantly remember pain related to these dosha.

5. Asakthi: Mental or inner detachment, avoidance of mental slavery with regard to any external objects. Dispassion through discrimination and not by suppression.
6. Anabishishvangaha; Absence of excessive attachment with child, spouse, house etc.; things with which we move constantly. Attachment to these can't be avoided, but we should avoid excessive attachment. Attachment is mamakara, excessive attachment is when I become one with that object and don't see any difference between that object and me.
7. Samacit tatvam: Being equanimous; this is the essence of karma yoga. Freedom from elation and depression of good and bad situation. Don't be carried away in good and bad situations. Every human being will have favorable and unfavorable situations. Spiritual growth requires suffering also. Accept every experience as eeswara prasadam for my spiritual growth.
8. Ananya Yogana: Bhakti; There is no question of secular karma yoga; karma yoga presupposes faith in God or bhakti. Prasadam means tranquility of mind; accept everything as a prasadam from lord. This is possible only when there is devotion to the Lord. Without bhakti and devotion, there can't be karma yoga.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 169 – Chapter 13 Verses 8 to 12

From verse 8 to 12, Krishna deals with jñānam which is those virtues that will make the mind fit for self-knowledge. These virtues must be cultivated by everyone. Gaining self-

knowledge is relatively easy, but cultivating these virtues take time and effort. These virtues are more important than vedantic studies. We have seen the first three in the last class. The virtues are:

1. Amānitvam: . Amānitvam is freedom from self-admiration or self-conceit or humility.
2. Adhambithvam: Adhambithvam is not requiring admiration at physical level. Not seeking attention; simplicity.
3. Ahimsa: Nonviolence; not hurting other beings.
4. Shanti: There are two aspects of shanti:
 1. The first aspect of Shanthi is titikṣā, which is acceptance without resistance of all choiceless situations of life. There are many situations over which have no control. Those situations are all choiceless situations. Since I do not have control over these situations, I can only change my attitude towards these situations. This acceptance is called titikṣā. I have no control over past, even God can't change the past. So, the past comes under choiceless situation. The present is also choiceless, because it has already arrived. So, we can only prepare our mind to accept the situations of past and present. This acceptance can be healthy or unhealthy. Unhealthy acceptance is with bitterness and self pity and frustration and anger towards world and God. This is not titikṣā, because our mind and other resource are not available for any constructive activities. Healthy acceptance is where I don't allow the choice less situation to overwhelm me, I ignore the situation and allow my resources to function in a constructive manner. It appears very difficult, but it is possible to ignore unfavorable situations. An example is Stephen Hawkins.

1. The second aspect of shanti is shama. The future is not choiceless, but the future can be changed with free will and resources. With regard to the future, we do not need acceptance, because the future is not choiceless and can be transformed. But any such transformation or change requires time and patience. We require the capacity to wait. This second aspect of Shanthi is shama which is capacity to wait; everything takes its own time. The future has to unfold in its own time. Develop patience in the present. Shanti is required to develop ahimsa.
5. Aarjavam: Alignment of threefold personality – physical, verbal and mental. If thought, word and deed are in alignment, that person is an integrated, harmonized, healthy personality. When there is no alignment, it results in a split personality and there is a strain taking place in the personality. Without alignment, there is a gradual buildup of stress, resulting in disintegrated personality. The first exercise in aarjavam is punctuality. Truthfulness is a sub division of aarjavam.
6. Acharya upasanam: Reverence towards teacher. When we worship a guru, the worship goes to the sastra as acharya represents the sastras in him. Why should we worship sastras and vedas? Sastras and vedas are like the sixth sense organ; it gives knowledge that the other sense organs cannot give. Other sense organs cannot verify or contradict the knowledge given by sastras. This accepting capacity is shraddha. This shraddha is difficult to develop and should be done through acharya upasanam. You accept the knowledge from Vedas as fact. Without this shraddha we will never be able to assimilate vedanta.
7. Soucham: Purity; cleanliness at personal level and

surrounding levels; cleanliness at verbal and thought levels. Developing all the virtues (amānitvam, ahimsa and shanti) that keep our mind calm and healthy.

8. Sthyriyam; Will power; commitment; perseverance. When we start any pursuit, there will be obstacles and setbacks. Sthyriyam is continuing the pursuit despite obstacles and setbacks.
9. Atma vinigraha: Self-mastery; self-management; Being the master of my own instruments. We have 17 indriyam or organs; Through these instruments alone we accomplish any goals. Before using any of these instruments, we have to make sure the instrument is healthy and under our control. This is atma vinigraha. In this context, atma stands for sthūla, sukshma śarīram. Ashtanga yoga is one way to get atma vinigraha and prepare for vedanta sravanam.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 168 – Chapter 13 Verses 8 to 12

In verses 2 to 7, Lord Krishna elaborates kṣetram and kṣetrajña. These topics are also discussed in Chapter 2 as consciousness and matter principles.

Verses 8 through 12

Humility, simplicity, non-violence, forbearance, uprightness, service to the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control, detachment from sense objects, absence of egoism, constantly seeing the defect of identification with son, wife, house, etc., always being Equanimeous in desirable and undesirable situations, unswerving devotion to Me with constant self-

inquiry and not losing sight of the fruit of self-knowledge – all this is said to be gyanam. That which is opposed to this jñānam.

In verses 8 to 12, Lord Krishna deals with jñānam. In this context jñānam means group of mental virtues required to enjoy a fit mind for gaining spiritual knowledge. In the presence of these virtues mind will be jñāna yoga. An unfit mind will resist jñānam and it will receive the jñānam and even it receives the knowledge it will not be unassimilated. This can be counterproductive. So, one should focus more on the values required for moksha/ jñānam. These values are otherwise known as dharma. Dharma is the steppingstone for moksha purusārtha. Without going through dharma, a person can't hope to obtain jñānam or moksha.

In these verses, about twenty virtues are given by Krishna.

1. Amānitvam: Mānitvam is self-glory, looking upon oneself as a great person. Amānitvam is freedom from self-admiration or self-conceit or humility.

1. Self-admiration is a big obstacle for jñānam, because it is addictive, and we will need it all the time. Deprivation of admiration by society causes problems like any other addiction. While it is the duty of society to admire accomplishments, we ourself should not join that admiration.

1. Self-discriminative power is lost by self-glorification and excitement. Once the discriminatory power is lost, I lose sight of important facts:

1. Whatever the accomplishment, there are enumerable other factors and people involved. My contribution is only one of the factors, but in excitement I take full credit for the accomplishment. Whatever the

name and fame, most of the credit goes to other factors.

1. Whatever the accomplishment, it is because of the talent I was born with which is a gift from God; I forget God's contribution. Self-conceit and bhakti cannot co-exist.
1. However great I am, I can never claim myself to be the greatest one, because I live in a world where there are people, there were people and there will be people who are greater than me. Because I forget this fact, I can never admire another person who is greater than me. A self-conceited person can't admire another person. When this self-conceit is replaced by anger and jealousy. Once self-conceit sets in the door of devotion is gone.

In our purana there are many stories illustrating amānitvam.

- Adhambithvam: Dhambithvam is physical expression of mānitvam. Adhambithvam is not requiring admiration at physical level. Not seeking attention; simplicity; inconspicuous in a crowd.
- Ahimsa: Nonviolence; not hurting other beings. We have three weapons for hurting others:
 - Body – kayikam or action
 - Speech (animals don't have this weapon). Humans have this weapon which can be used wisely or abused.
 - Mental. Mentally cursing others, hurting others through thoughts.

In ashtanga yoga, the first vow to be followed by a spiritual seeker is ahimsa. The significance of ahimsa:

1. I do not want to do anything to others that I don't want other to do to me. This is our instinctive feeling, so this is also instinctive feeling for others. This is the universal law and anytime we violate universal law, we are violating dharma. When we violate dharma, nothing happens to dharma, but we hurt ourselves.
 2. Whatever I contribute to the world now that alone I can withdraw later. If I contribute himsa, I only get himsa back. If I don't want to be injured by the world, then we should follow ahimsa.
 3. The tendency to hurt others is impulsive and natural. When expectations are not fulfilled then I am hurt. Then the immediate reaction is to hurt that object which is the cause of my hurt. An injured person injures others and there is no gap between my injury and causing injury to others. If this natural reaction can stop only when my mind becomes sensitive, that when I hurt someone else, the sensitive mind should feel the pain of others. For a sensitive person, hurting another person is like causing self-injury. Sensitized mind and empathy are required to follow ahimsa. A sensitive mind is required to understand sensitive topics of vedanta. Crime itself becomes punishment for a sensitive mind.
 4. Shanti: One meaning of shanti is mental resistance or immunity so mind is not disturbed when expectations are not fulfilled. Shanti is developing that mental immunity so that I am not vulnerable to external fluctuations.
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Bhagwat Geeta, Class 167 – Chapter 13 Verses 5 to 8

In the beginning of 13th chapter, Arjuna asked for the clarification of six technical terms: Of these six terms, Lord Krishna defines Kṣetram as the body which includes any object of experience in the creation and Kṣetrajña as the experiencer or the subject.

Now Krishna gives simple elaboration of these two words. What is kṣetram, what is the cause of kṣetram and what is the effect of kṣetram. All the causes come under kṣetram, and the effects also come under kṣetram. The entire kārīya kāraṇa prabañca comes under kṣetram. The corollary of this statement is kṣetrajña should be other than cause and effect. The knowledge of these two alone is real knowledge.

Verse 5

This has been taught by the sages variously. This has been revealed distinctly through various Vedic hymns. This has been taught through logical and well ascertained upaniṣadic statements which reveal Brahman.

Kṣetram includes the entire material world; kṣetrajña is consciousness. The entire creation is the mixture of these two, that is consciousness and matter. All the rishis and vedic mantras distinctly explain these two. Consciousness is sathyam or reality and matter is mithya, and I am the consciousness principle.

Verses 6 and 7

The five subtle elements ahankara, mahat, prakriti, the ten sense organs, the mind, the five gross elements, desire hatred, pleasure, pain, the body mind complex, sentiency, fortitude – all this enumerated above briefly, is kṣetram,

together with its modification.

The vedic philosophers have categorized the universe into various tattvas. Here the universe is categorized into 24 tatvam.

1. The first basic matter principle is prakriti; potential form of universe; this prakriti is basic matter and does not have origination. In scientific language it is the condition before big bang.
2. Mahat is the total matter in the first stage of evolution.
3. Next is Ahankara. Ahankara is the name of total matter and not individual ego, cosmic ego.
4. 16 tatvam originate from ahankara:
 1. Cosmic mind.
 1. Ten indriyam; ten sense organs or powers of perceptions.
 1. Panca sukshma budhani; five subtle elements.
5. From the subtle elements five sthūla budhani originate

These 24 are matter or kṣetram, the inert material objects. All these tatvam undergo constant change. Due to the constant changes gunas are created.

Our physical body and the mind are modification of the subtle elements so they both are matter. The mind is an inert matter, but it has the ability to reflect the consciousness and appear to be sentient. Reflected consciousness makes the mind appear to be sentient; this borrowed sentiency is chethana. This reflection can exist wherever there is a reflecting medium, which is kṣetram. So, the reflected consciousness is also kṣetram or the material universe. The objective world created by the Lord is replaced by the subjective world created by me. Raga and dwesha, desirable

and undesirable worlds, are the result of this creation. This results in sugam and duḥkam. No object in the public world does produce sugam and duḥkam, however every object in my private world produces sugam and duḥkam. Every object produces joy by arrival, and it produces sorrow by departure. So, every object produces sugam and duḥkam. Every undesirable object produces sugam when it departs from me and produces duḥkam when it arrives. This capacity of this world is not intrinsic, but only because of my classification of the world as desirable and undesirable. So, every object is not capable of producing joy and sorrow; world produces sorrow or joy only after we classify them desirable and undesirable by attaching raga and dwesha. This list constantly changes, and lifelong struggle is to take care of this list.

Verse 8

With verse 7, Krishna concludes the analysis of kṣetram, but he does not elaborate kṣetrajñā. He will elaborate the discussion of jñānam and puruṣa later. Now Krishna comes to the third topic, jñānam from verse 8 to 12. In these verses, jñānam means spiritual knowledge in these verse and it represents sat guna or virtue. If these virtues are there, self-knowledge is automatically obtained.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 166 – Chapter 13 Verses 3 and 4

Arjuna asked for the clarification of six technical terms.
The six terms are:

1. Prakriti

2. Purusha,
3. kṣetram,
4. *kṣetrajña*
5. jñeyam.
6. jñānam

Lord Krishna takes up the two words kṣetram and kṣetrajña. The word kṣetram means the entire objective universe experienced by us. It includes the world, the body and mind. Among these three, the world is away from us and the body/mind is intimately associated with me the observer. So, the body and mind appear to be integral part of me.

An object which serves as an instrument is integrally connected to the subject and we include that with the observer. Similar to how we include spectacles as part of us. Similarly, body and mind are instruments, but they appear to be an integral part of the observer. But both of them should be included in kṣetram, the objective universe consists of three: Body, mind and universe. Kṣetrajña is different than the body but makes the body an enliven body. The principle behind kṣetram is kṣetrajña. We should understand that an individual is a mixture of body and consciousness or dheha and dhehi or atma and anatma. Generally, we tend to identify with the body only. After the study of vedanta, we say that we are body and behind the body there is an eternal consciousness or atma. That is not the right approach. The right approach is saying that I am the consciousness and body is only an incidental medium through which we transact with the world. We are using the body temporarily and should be willing to give it back to the world. This shift of identification from kṣetram to *kṣetrajña* called aparoksha jñānam.

Verse 3

Oh Arjuna! Moreover, know the kṣetrajña to be Myself,

obtaining in all bodies. The knowledge which deals with kṣetram and kṣetrajña is true knowledge. This is My teaching.

The steps in understanding ourselves:

1. First, we identify ourselves with body and say I am the body.
2. Then we say that I am the body backed by consciousness.
3. Then we say I am not the body with consciousness, but I am the consciousness with an incidental body.
4. Finally, we say I am the consciousness not only behind my body but also the consciousness behind every body. The consciousness is also there in between the bodies. The consciousness in between the bodies is not recognizable because there is no medium to transact the consciousness. Consciousness pervades everywhere. Wherever body is there, consciousness manifests itself and wherever body is not there, consciousness does not manifest itself.

Consciousness has two names. From the standpoint of a single body or individual body, it is called jivatma. The very same consciousness from the standpoint of all the body or totality, it is called paramatma. From a micro standpoint it is jivatma and from the macro standpoint it is paramatma. If you negate micro and macro, it is atma. Jivatma is atma, paramatma is atma, both are essentially the same. This recognition is jivatma paramatma aikya Jñānam. This is similar to wave and ocean; they both are water only and the wave and ocean are different names and forms given to water. The containers (different bodies) are different, but the content is only one atma. This is the real knowledge that must be acquired by everyone. This is para vidya and all other knowledge are apara vidya. Shankaracharya boldly says apara vidya is ignorance.

How does this knowledge change our lives? Consider two waves;

one wave knows that I am the wave; the other wave knows that it is water. The first wave keeps growing as it approaches the shores, but it knows that it will be no more when it reaches the shore. As long as it thinks itself as wave, it can't evade this insecurity. But the second wave knows that the wave is only a name and form but in reality, it is water and therefore does not have the same insecurity. Similarly, as long as we consider ourselves as the mortal body, there will be insecurity. When we see ourselves as atma, that knowledge will give security. All other knowledge only will give only a false sense of security.

But we must note that vedanta does not give security; Vedanta removes the sense of insecurity by revealing that you don't need any support from outside to be secure.

Verse 4

What is kṣetram? Of what nature is it? Of what effects is it? Which effect comes out of which cause? What is that kṣetrājña. And of what glory is it? Hear that from me briefly.

In the previous two verses, Krishna briefly described kṣetram and kṣetrājña. In this verse, he elaborates the following:

What is kṣetram?

What is the nature of kṣetram?

What are the causes of kṣetram?

What are the effects of kṣetram?

Krishna also elaborates kṣetrājña.

What is kṣetrājña or consciousness?

What are the glories or features of kṣetrājña?

A scientist says consciousness is that which is not subject to

the laws of creation and it does not have a physical location; it is beyond time and space.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 165 – Chapter 13 Verses 1 and 2

In the 12th chapter makes the end of madhyama śatakam of Bhagavat Gita. Each śatakam consists of six chapters. The three śatakam and the topics highlighted are:

Prathama śatakam: First part of Gita (First to 6th Chapter);
Topics:

1. Jiva swaroopam,
2. Karma yoga,
3. Importance of individual effort or prayarthana. Everything is not pre-determined; we also have free will. Fate alone does not determine our future and we should not embrace fatalism. Vedic approach is fate is only one of the contributors to our future. In addition to fate, the other important factor is our free will or purusārtha or parayarthana. Only when you work for your own upliftment, God will come to your help.

Madhyama śatakam: Seventh to 12th Chapter Topics:

1. Eeswara swaroopam.
2. Eeswara upasana yoga. Meditation up on eeswara. This can be in the form of ishta devata upasanam or in the form of viśvarūpa upasanam, meditating up on the lord as

the very universe itself.

3. Importance of Eeswara anugraha or the help from the Lord. Even the greatest advaidin should value the role of eeswara anugraha.

Charama śatakam (13th to 18th)

1. Eeswara jiva swaroopam aikyam. The essential oneness of eeswara swaroopam and jiva swaroopam. We indirectly convey there is superficial difference between jiva and eeswara, similar to wave and ocean. The difference between the two (like size, length of time etc..) are only superficial. The essential nature of ocean and wave is water. There are no waves without water and there is no ocean without water. If you shift your focus to water, then waves and ocean are essentially one and the same. Similarly, jivatma is essentially atma; paramatma is essentially also atma.
2. jñāna Yoga as a sadhana, meant to discover the essential oneness. Once the wave discovers that it is water, then there is no end for the wave. jñāna yoga is understanding the equation that jivatma equals paramatma. When you look at eeswara and when you look at jiva, they are very different. paramatma is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresence. Jivatma is exactly the opposite of this. But the differences are only superficial. When you arrive at the essence of jivatma and paramatma, you discover that they are essentially one and the same. The inquiry you make to arrive at this conclusion is jñāna yoga or vedanta sravana, manana nidhithyasanam.
3. Importance of values; developing sat guna, noble virtues. Just like we prepare the ground, before sowing the seeds, we should develop noble virtues to understand vedanta; these values are also known as sadhana catuṣṭaya saṃpatti.

Verse 1:

Arjuna asked – Oh Lord! I desire to know the following: prakriti, purusha, kṣetram, kṣetrajña, jñānam and jñeyam.

Arjuna gives six technical words of vedanta and asks for clarification. The words are:

1. Prakriti
2. Purusha,
3. kṣetram,
4. kṣetrajña
5. jñeyam.
6. jñānam

Some of these words are synonymous. The words prakriti and kṣetram, are synonymous, both of them are products of material world and are the objects of our experience. According to vedanta, it includes the world, energy, body, and mind.

Purusha, kṣetram and jñeyam are all synonymous, they all stand for chaithanyam or consciousness.

jñānam is the only word left out. In this chapter, jñānam means virtues or values or sat guna.

So, the six technical words are condensed into three concepts:

1. Prakriti and kṣetram. These two words stand for material aspects.
2. Purusha, kṣetram and jñeyam; they all stand for consciousness.
3. Jñānam, meaning sat guna in this context.

Verse 2

Lord Krishan said Oh Arjuna! This body is known as kṣetra (There is a conscious principle) which knows this (body).

Wise men declare that knower principle to be kṣetrajña.

Krishna rearranges the questions, Krishna starts with the third item, kṣetram. This body you are experiencing is kṣetram. Meanings of kṣetra as told by Sankarachariyar:

- One that is subject to decay; disintegrates and dies. The word śarīram also means the same thing. The word śarīram or deha refers to suffering from threefold factors:
 - Internal, (body getting old, getting decessed, etc.).
 - External.
 - Nature or dharma
- Any agricultural field is called kṣetram and our physical body is comparable to a field. Just like the seeds grow at different times, our karma also fructifies at different times. Just like seeds require land to grow into plants, we require body to convert pāpam into suffering and puṇyam into sugam. We also should include the mind and external world as kṣetram. Body, mind, and external world are all called kṣetram; whatever you experience is kṣetram. All the three are objects of experience and made up of matter. All the three are subject to constant change. World, body, and mind are all subject to change and saṁskāra. Krishna focusses on the body because we are focused mostly on body.

The second topic is whatever illumines the kṣetram. An experience presupposes a sentient experiencer or perceiver or conscious principle and that is called *kṣetrajña*. In short, *kṣetrajña* means consciousness principle. kṣetram means material principle.

What is the nature of this consciousness is a fundamental

question. According to vedanta, consciousness has the following principles:

1. It is not a part, product, or property of the body.
 2. It is an independent entity that pervades the inert body and makes it sentient.
 3. It is not limited by the boundaries of the body; it extends beyond the periphery of the body.
 4. It will continue to exist even after the body perishes; it is eternal.
 5. The surviving consciousness is not recognizable because there is no body for it to manifest or express.
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Bhagwat Geeta, Class 164 – Chapter 12 Bhakti Yoga Summary

The 12th chapter is Culmination of middle section of Bagawad Gita, called madhyama śatakam. Bhakti or love or devotion is possible only towards someone who is known. Our attitude towards God will also depend on our knowledge of God. Knowledge alone can contribute towards a healthy attitude.

Five chapters are devoted to give knowledge of God. This 12th chapter is the culmination of the previous five chapters. In this chapter Lord Krishna has condensed entire vedantic teachings, both Veda Poorva and Vedanta concepts. This chapter has two topics – bhakti yoga and bhakti yoga palam.

This chapter begins with a question from Arjuna (verses 1 to 3), based on the previous chapter – viśvarūpa eeswara, which

comes under saguna eeswara. Arjuna has heard about nirguna eeswara also and he has a question of superiority of saguna and nirguna eeswara. Generally, we are attracted to saguna eeswara because we are not capable of conceiving nirguna eeswara. This question is relevant only when there is a question of choice. In this case, there are no choices. One must follow both saguna dhyānam and nirguna dhyānam. Without saguna dhyānam, one can not come to nirguna dhyānam. Without nirguna dhyānam, saguna dhyānam is not complete. Nirguna eeswara is the ultimate reality.

Bhakti yoga is not the name of a particular sadhana, but a range of sadhana that everyone must go through (Verses 3 to 12). This range consists of five levels.

1. Sakama Karma Pradhāna Karma Yoga: This is the beginning stage where a person is allowed to do any karma to fulfil personal desire. For the maintenance of acquired karmas (yoga shema pradhāna karma), transfer some of the yoga shema to lord. Then only we will have time for the other activities which is meant for chitha siddhi.
2. Nishkama Karma Pradhana Yoga or chitha siddhi pradhāna karma yoga. Accept to live with whatever comes our way.

1 plus 2 is kama yoga.

- Ishta Devata Upasana: Transfer yoga shema to lord, enabling the mind to turn inward, forgetting family, and other samsara. In 12th chapter, this is called abyāsaḥ yoga; look at ishta devata as viśvarūpa eeswara.
- Viśvarūpa dhyānam is aneka roopa dhyānam. Once, I look upon as total universe, there are not many gods. The Lord is not bound by any form, and this helps in the expansion of mind. At this point he is Sadhana Catuṣṭaya Sampatti. This is the mental preparedness for knowledge.

- jñāna Yoga: The final level of bhakti is self-inquiry. This consists of vedanta sravanam manana Nidhithyasanam, consistent systematic study of vedantic scriptures for a length of time under the guidance of competent guru (sravanam). Krishna states this in the fourth chapter. That nirguna eeswara is not different from me, the real me. Any doubt that obstructs this knowledge should be removed (mananam). Internalize and assimilate vedanta that I am the higher nature (nidhithyasanam).

When the five levels are completed, there will be a transfer of emotional personality. The first four levels belong to veda poorva and the fifth level belong to Vedanta. These five levels do not have clear cut division. We will be following all the sadhanas, but one of them will be predominant.

Verses 13 to 19: Bhakti Yoga Palam:

1. Direct benefit of bhakti yoga is atma jñānam; aham brahma asmi; I am pūrṇaḥ; I am complete.
2. Removal of ignorance: What is the connection between intellectual knowledge and emotional benefit. Vedanta says we are complete and pūrṇaḥ. Due to self-ignorance, we don't realize that we are complete. Ignorance leads to erroneous conclusion that we are incomplete. This erroneous conclusion is at an intellectual level. When we feel we are incomplete, we go on struggling in life and we go after other material benefits, searching for something that will make us complete. This is kama and it is at emotional level. When there is obstruction to kama, there is krōdha. Fulfilment of kama leads to more kama. Unfulfillment of kama leads to krōdha. Fulfilled kama leads to lōbha. Kama is caused by ignorance – that I am incomplete – apurna. This ignorance is at the intellectual level, but the result is at emotional level – kama and krōdha.

All our transactions are at three different levels:

1. As a kartha – doer
2. As a boktha – experiencer
3. As a Pramada or witness/observer

Benefits of bhakti yoga are:

1. As a kartha, all my actions are not meant for fulfilment but done with fulfilment (poornatvam) – acceptance of the result.
2. As a boktha, my mind has fullness, love and compassion; that mind is not vulnerable to emotional disturbances, like anger, impulsive actions etc.
3. As a Pramada, the action comes from love and compassion without expectations, the quality of actions are excellent. The action is sound and appropriate. As an observer the perspective of the experiencer is tranquility not subject to raga and dwesha.

To get these benefits, everyone has to go through all five stages.