

Bagawat Geeta, Class 18

Greetings All,
Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

Shloka #20:

“This Self is never born; It never dies either. Having been born, It never ceases to be, again. Unborn, eternal and everlasting, this ancient One is not slain when the body is slain.”

Refreshing our memory of last class, Swamiji reminded us that Sri Krishna is talking about the nature of the Self and shows how it is different from the body mind complex. Atma is eternal, Atma is reality, everything depends on Atma, and Atma is Sarvagathaha. Bodies are many, however the Atma behind them is actually one, all pervading and advaitham. Atma is Aprameya, not an object of experience. It is the experiencer. Repeating example of photograph, where while a camera is there, it is never in the picture. You cannot experience yourself, as you are Aprameya. Atma is Akartha and Abhokta, neither doer nor reaper of results. Atma is beyond Punyam, papam, sukham and dukham.

All these are a result of Karmaphalam. Atma is nirvikaraha, meaning free from all six modifications (existence, birth, growth, change, decay and death). Atma is intimately connected to body but whatever happens to body does not affect Atma. This is illustrated in the example of a movie shown on a screen. The actors and story in the movie do not affect the screen in any way shape or form.

Shloka 21:

“ How can a man, O Arjuna! Who knows It as the imperishable, the eternal, the unborn, the undecaying, cause anyone to be slain? Whom can he slay?”

What is the goal of a spiritual seeker? It is Veda, says

Swamiji. Veda here is a verb and does not mean scriptures, it means one who knows. He has to know Atma. The aim of the spiritual seeker is to know that Atma is indestructible, unborn and without decay. The knowing happens in two stages. First is separating the body and consciousness. Light is not an integral part of the hand, but it is a separate entity. Similarly, consciousness is not an integral part of body. Having differentiated this finding out which one of the two claims to be me? Body alone is "I am" is normally the claim. We are enamored with this body. So we have to disclaim the body and claim the consciousness as myself. Even understanding Atma/Anatma is possible but shifting to Atma is difficult. I have to go on telling myself that the body is a borrowed material. Even an iceberg is water, born out of water, floats on water until it dissolves in water.

This body belongs to matter. I am the consciousness. It will survive dissolution. Turning the eye from matter to consciousness or from Anatma to Atma is called Nididhyasanam. This shift, with practice, becomes natural. This is assimilated knowledge. What is its advantage? Before it, I would say Atma is Akartha and Abhoktha, now I am the Akartha and Abhoktha. Now I am Nityaha, all pervading. I am ever the Subject; I am free from all six modifications. Therefore a Gyani is Akartha. Action is direct or indirect in nature. Direct action is when I act; indirect action is when I instigate someone else to act. So when a person steals something; that is also crime. When a person engages someone to steal something, that person also has committed mistake. Both actions have Karmaphalam. In this state of a Gyani, there is neither direct nor indirect action. And to indicate this we have two Sanskrit words; direct-doer, I am called kartah, if I am an indirect-doer; I am called a Karayitah; Kartah and Karayitah.

Atma is neither Kartha nor Karayitaha. How can such Atma kill or instigate some one to kill, asks Sri Krishna.

Shloka 22:

“ Just as a man puts on fresh clothes after discarding worn out ones, so does the embodied Self , discarding worn out bodies, proceed to take new ones”

Sri Krishna is now talking about Punarjanmam and death and what happens at these two stages. Death and re-birth are like changing the clothes. Before death we existed. After we remove a dress we still remain as is. Change is only for the dress I still remain as is. Every time a living being is born, it is freshly dressed up. How long you remain in a dress differs. You discard the dress or the body after sometime. You discard worn out clothes when it cannot serve its purpose. Now you put on another new cloth and go out. This body is used for sometime and when it is useless, a Jiva discards the body. It considers it a burden. Jiva is invisible, when the body is gone. Swamiji says it is in a green room of Bhagawan where it puts on another dress. Jiva then comes out in another body for transactions. This is the punarapijananam and punarapi maranam cycle. You can look at the world from two perspectives. Swamiji reminded us of Sthula sharira, Sukshma sharira, Karana sharira and Atma from Tatva bodha. Of these four, the physical body, Sthula Sharira, alone perishes. The other three survive.

Thus:

Sukshma Shariram with mind continues.

Karana Shariram continues.

Atma continues.

The Sukshma Shariram, with mind, travels to another place to experience in another body. Non-perception is not non-existence. Swamiji is referring to the travel of Sukhma Sharira. The travel is as per law of Karma. If a lot of punyam has accrued one gets a good shariram. If punyam and papam are in equal proportions one gets a manushya shariram.

Where does Atma Travel? Atma does not travel. It is all

pervading. Atma just remains as is, while bodies keep changing. In a building the space does not change. If a building is erased and another one comes up the space still remains the same. Bodies appear and disappear. Atma remains.

Shloka 23:

“Weapons do not cut It, fire does not burn It, Neither does water wet It ; nor does the wind dry It”

Even though Atma is intimately associated with the body it is not affected by changes to body. The four of five elements except Akasha affects body.

Thus:

Prithvi—weapons can cut the body

Jalam drowns the body.

Fire burns the body.

Air dries the body.

But none of them can affect the Atma. Fire does not burn the Atma, water does not drown it, Wind does not dry it, and weapons cannot destroy it.

You are immortal. Your nature is immortal. “I” should not disappear. This is an inherent urge in us. I am mortal; we cannot accept this statement, because it is not natural. If it were natural we would have accepted it. What is unnatural, we reject. Example is the case of hip transplant where there are rejections by the body. Mortality everyone rejects. Everyone wants to live a day more. “I” am ever there. I am also all pervading. I am beyond time and space. Out of shape is an example. Our body changes with time. Time cannot change “me”. Lord Shiva is known as Sthanunathaha. I am motionless, Achalaha. Only a limited entity can move. The Atma is limitless and Sanatanaha, or ever fresh. Hence the same name for Hinduism. Purvabhaga related to Dharma, and Uttarabhaga related to Brahman, both do not change. Ahimsa is a value from time immemorial. Satyam, Ahimsa etc. are all Sanatanaha. Brahman also does not change. Sanatana Dharma

teaches changeless values.

All sciences change from time to time. Physics, Chemistry, medicine etc. change. What does not change? Dharma does not change. Vedas too cannot become obsolete.

Shloka #25:

“This Self is said to be unmanifest, imponderable and immutable. Knowing It to be such, you ought not to grieve for It.”

With this shloka Atma Swaroopam is concluded.

Avyaktha means not available to organs of perception. The five sense organs can perceive senses. Eyes can see color, nose can smell, tongue can taste, skin can touch etc. Atma is free from sabda, sparsa, rupa, rasa and gandha. These five properties belong to matter. They belong to the pañca bhuthas the five elements. Akasha, Vayu, Agni, Jalam and Prithvi the five elements have the five properties. Atma is non-material, hence Avyaktha.

All our perceptions cannot perceive Atma. In meditation we can only experience blankness. Mind cannot however conceive of and think of Atma. What you think of in meditation is not Atma. Then what is Atma? The thinker is ātma. So it is never thought, but it is ever the thinker. Never the object. It is ever the subject. It is Aprameya.

Arjuna, you are Atma, I am Atma, Bhishma is Atma. You are not killing anyone. Do not grieve over any person. Nobody deserves grief. By grieving, the body will not come back. Atma will continue. Just do what you have to do. Do not grieve. If you understand this fact, why grieve? Grief is a delusion.

With Regards,
Ram Ramaswamy