

Bagawat Geeta, Class 20

Greetings All,

Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

Shloka: 29:

“One beholds It as a marvel. Similarly, another talks of it as a marvel. Yet another hears of It as a marvel. Even after hearing, none indeed knows It aright.”

Refreshing our memory of last class, Swamiji reminded us that all the verses from Shloka 12 onwards are about Sri Krishna talking about Atma Swaroopa. He describes how Atma is different from Anatma, the body, and mind and thought complex. Atma and Anatma are mixed physically, because of which there is confusion. Sri Krishna separates Atma, the Consciousness, from the body. Anatma is a pseudo “You” that can be used for many purposes. The knowledge of the real “I” is Atma Gyanam or Samkhya Yoga. Shlokas 29 and 30 are the conclusion of Atma Gyanam.

Sri Krishna has gone through all this to help Arjuna overcome his sorrow. Self-realization is the only way one can totally remove sorrow. Shokha Nivriti can only occur only through Atma Gyanam. This knowledge is also called Mahatmyam.

This self-realization is the greatest wonder in the universe. What is the “wonder” asks Swamiji? Answering, he says, every human being is looking for certain fundamental goals in life such as success in business, politics etc. Even though the goals are superficially different, underneath they are all the same. One desires fulfillment in life, a sense of security, and happiness. There are many types of insecurity. If you have less money, you feel insecure. If you have more money, you feel insecure of about how to protect the money. So, these are the three basic goals every one has in life. Atma or Brahman represents all these goals. Atma

represents fulfillment, security and happiness. Thus, we are all seeking Atma alone. This is the greatest wonder of this world. The greater wonder is that it, the Atma, is the very nature of the seeker. Atma is one's own intrinsic self. Every one is seeking himself or herself. We go all over the world seeking this knowledge, not knowing that it is within you. I am looking for myself, this is the greatest wonder. The greatest hiding place is our selves.

Describing the story of a rich man traveling on a long distance train, the man counts the money every morning. Sitting across him was a thief whose only goal was to get the money from him. The first three days the thief tried but could not retrieve the money. The last day, the fourth, he was desperate to know, so he told the rich man who he really was and wanted to know the secret of where he hid the money. The rich man said I hid it in a place you will never look for. I was hiding it every night under your pillow. Just as in this story we also do not look for fulfillment, security and happiness within ourselves.

I tried it get it from my toys, from the spouse, from the children, from the grand children; from all over the world, but I never tried one thing; I, and that is myself. So, Atma is the greatest secret because it is never searched for. So, when the teacher says you are what you are seeking, it comes as a shock. Never look for Atma; you will never come across it. You are the Atma. It is not a new substance being revealed, however, it is a new status about myself revealed by Vedantha. "I" am the secure, happy and fulfilled "I".

Giving example of Karna, Swamiji says, when he meets Kunti, he becomes aware for the first time that he was a Kshatriya, the sixth Pandava. Until then he had an inferiority complex that he was a Suta Putra a non-Kshatriya. Once he learns he also is a Kshatriya his status changes. He drops the notion that he was not a Kshatriya. So also with Atman, it is a simple recognition of the Atman as a fact.

Aham Brahmasmi is recognition of the fact about myself. Now I know security, fulfillment and happiness etc. are my name. A notion is dropped. Self- Knowledge is the greatest wonder.

So one student; one seeker sees this fact as a great wonder; because he wonders, how I missed this fact all along. When we were children, we postponed our peace of mind for youth. All the children envy their parents who did not have much to do. They thought the parents were happiest people. They did not have to study or take exams. Now interview them. We had pocket money, and so many other things; and no worries; we now envy our childhood days.

Now we again postpone. Swamiji, I plan to take voluntary retirement; so that I can spend more time. Before retirement, he was attending three classes; now he is hardly able to make to even one class.

We are always postponing for security and it seems like a wild goose chase and it is receding. Is my direction of search the right one? Perhaps, I am searching in the wrong direction. And then we come to Vedanta and discover the right path.

Giving another example Swamiji says, a Brahmin went to bath in a pond. He lost his ring in the pond. He searched for some time and then decided to go to another pond to search for the ring. He felt the first pond was too crowded. Seeing him others also joined him in search. Until somebody asked him where did he lose his ring? So also with us, the world is searching like sheep for the ring. One who listens to Vedanta sees it as a wonder.

Therefore, teacher (Guru) is a wonder; knower (Shishya) is a wonder, and a non-knower, the one who does not understand is the greatest wonder.

The block is our objectification tendency. I look for It outside as well as inside. Atma is neither outside, nor inside me; it is Me. There is no preposition connecting Atma and

myself. And the knack to get it is difficult for some people. Once we get the knack, it is a like a puzzle. But once you have seen the clue, it is the easiest thing.

Shloka # 30:

“This embodied self (dwelling) in the bodies of all, O Bharatha Prince ! is eternally indestructible. Therefore, you ought not to grieve for any being at all.”

Sri Krishna concludes Atma Gyanam in this shloka. Briefly it means: Body is mortal, subject to old age, disease and death. We cannot conquer these three. Once we are born, we should accept this reality. Unfortunately, we do not know when we will die. Therefore, please be ready to welcome death or mortality at anytime. Behind mortal body is the real “I”. Mortal body is superficial. The “I” behind it is the Dehi, the eternal “I”. Death will disturb the mind when it is in close quarters. Vedanta will make it tolerable. I will have to continue. Nothing shocks me. It is a manageable disturbance. So, Arjuna, accumulate this wisdom.

Ever indestructible, this Atma, is encased in the perishable body. It is the same with Bhishma and Drona. We accept mortality of others, but not our own or that of near ones. We should not grieve over death of any living being. Try to help them in their suffering but do not grieve over the death. It will not change the fact.

Shloka # 31:

“Having regard to the law of your own life, you ought not to be perturbed. A Kshatriya cannot have a greater good than a righteous battle.”

In Shloka # 30, Atma/ Anatma viveka was concluded as medicine for Arjuna’s sorrow and his delusion whether to fight or not.

Sri Krishna says, misplaced Ahimsa is as bad as Himsa. Once non-violent methods are exhausted, a Kshatriya should be able to take to violence, as a last resort. For this to be

accomplished Sri Krishna takes three approaches with Arjuna. The philosophical, Dharmic and Empirical or Laukika Drishthi.

With Shloka # 30 the philosophical approach is concluded. It is a difficult approach to grasp. It requires maturity or else it can be misinterpreted. Since Atma is Akartha and Abhoktha even a murderer can say his murder was justified based upon Vedanta. Real Vedanta is never against Dharma.

From Dharmic point of view the war is justified. Bhishma and Drona are to be killed because they are associated with an Adharmic group.

Slokas 31 through 33, the topic is Dharmic angle.

You may not understand Atma. However, as per your own Sva Dharma, that of a Kshatriya, you have to fight. This is as per Shastras.

Dharma is of two types: a) Samanya Dharma and b) Visesha Dharma.

Samanya Dharma is universal; it does not depend upon one's caste, creed, gender, etc. Yama and Niyama are part of

Samanya Dharma. The five Yamas are:

1. Ahimsā : Nonviolence, non-harming other living beings
2. Satya : truthfulness, non-falsehood
3. Asteya : non-stealing
4. Brahmacharya : chastity, marital fidelity or sexual restraint
5. Aparigraha : non-avarice, non-possessiveness

The five Niyamas are:

1. Śauca: purity, clearness of mind, speech and body
2. Santoṣa: contentment, acceptance of others and of one's circumstances as they are, optimism for self
3. Tapas: accepting and not causing pain

4. Svādhyāya: study of self and scriptures, self-reflection, introspection of self's thoughts, speeches and actions
5. Īśvarapraṇidhāna: contemplation of the Ishvara (God/Supreme Being, Brahman, True Self, Unchanging Reality)

Visesha Dharma: Varies from group to group, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishya, male, female, etc., depending on the duty of an individual on his designation in life. Thus, a Brahmin has no right to fight. It is a-dharmic. He can only report, he cannot fight.

For a Kshatriya, however, war is required. So, Arjuna, be aware of your social responsibility.

With Regards,
Ram Ramaswamy