

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 it 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 vairagya 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 eqanimity 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 prasada; They are not prasada; 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,

Ram Ramaswamy