

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 vairagya towards the

world; and without vairagya, 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 prapthi. 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 योग्यता. So, from Gyana योग्यता 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-boggling, 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