

# **Baghawad Gita, Class 172: Chapter 13, Verses 13 to 15**

**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 # 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.**

From shloka # 13 onwards Sri Krishna is discussing the fourth topic of Gneyam.

Gneyam

means that which is to be known by everyone; the ultimate truth, without this knowledge one can't obtain immortality. So, every human being must have this knowledge that is also known as Param Brahman. And every human being wants to conquer mortality, and therefore every human being should necessarily gain this knowledge. This Param Brahman is discussed in all Upanishads and that knowledge is called Brahma Vidya. Now Sri Krishna wants to give us the essence of Upanishads in shlokas # 13-19; it is the Upanishad Sara or Brahma vidya.

## **Shloka # 14:**

That (Knowable), which has hands and feet  
everywhere, which has eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, which  
has ears  
everywhere, exists in creatures by pervading them all.

In  
Upanishads, Brahman is revealed as ultimate substance out of  
which Universe is  
made of.

It  
is the ultimate content of universe. Science is also trying to  
find this  
substance. Once they said 100 elements made up the universe;  
then they tried to  
find out content of elements and found molecules; digging  
further they found molecules  
were made of invisible atoms in motion. While atoms are  
invisible, together,  
they create this tangible universe. Digging down further they  
found even atoms  
were made of sub-atomic particles.

Then the particles also, they tried to divide further, and  
they said energy, the intangible energy is the ultimate stuff  
of the universe. Thus they are going deeper and deeper, and  
their aim is what, to find out, what is the basic, ultimate  
substance. And the interesting thing that we see is **as you go  
deeper and deeper, the visible becomes the invisible. The  
tangible becomes the intangible. The concrete becomes the  
abstract. Therefore we come to know that the ultimate  
substance must be intangible, formless and abstract substance.**  
And what is that final abstract substance, the scientists have  
not yet arrived at; they are still in the process of enquiry.

Vedanta has analyzed the same subject matter and Vedanta has  
arrived at the ultimate substance and Vedanta calls it  
Brahman. Brahman is the basic substance of this creation, and

the being the ultimate substance, it is going to be abstract, it is going to be intangible; it is going to be invisible; it is ashabdam, asparsham, arupam, arasam and avyayam. And, therefore, understanding that Brahman is going to be a relatively tougher prospect. So we are going to analyze a substance, which is not available for seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and therefore this portion are going to be abstract. Therefore, it looks like a jumble of words because we try to concretely conceive of something, but we are not discussing a concrete and tangible thing. But still if you go on dwelling upon this teaching, slowly, the words will begin to make sense but it requires lot of intellectual acclimatization.

So to understand Brahman, it requires certain Acclimatization, therefore, for new students, this topic will look like a bunch of words, but do not be disappointed, but slowly if you dwell on, it will make sense.

How

should we approach this topic? Normally, we have seen a lot of substances in the world. So when we see a person, you qualify him/her as tall, lean, fat, fair etc.

We use a noun and an adjective. An adjective generally refers to a property like tall, short, fat, fair, round and in English, adjective, refers to properties of an object. And generally, the noun, like the tall tree, the fat man etc.; refer to substance. Adjectives reveal properties and attributes, while nouns reveal substances. This is where we have to begin. Adjectives reveal properties and nouns reveal substances; this is one thing we generally experience.

Now

there is another experience we have, which also we have to notice. When I say a

fat man, a tall tree, a round object, etc.; this is what I experience. Now I will give you another set of words; I say there is a golden bangle; there is a wooden chair. When I say Golden bangle, golden is adjective; and bangle is the noun. And when I say wooden chair, wooden is adjective; chair is noun.

Now in this particular case, when I say golden bangle, the word golden does not refer to a property, even though the word is an adjective; here in this unique and peculiar case, the word golden refers to the very substance of the bangle. So, Golden refers to the substance gold and not a property. And when I say a wooden chair, the word wooden is an adjective, but it still is not referring to a property; the word wooden here means the substance is nothing but wood.

And therefore in this particular case, adjective reveals a substance and not a property. Whereas, **when I say a tall person, adjective reveals a property, tallness. but when I say golden bangle, adjective reveals a substance.** Therefore rule No.1, I want to convey is that: an Adjective can reveal either a property or a substance. Both possibilities are there.

Similarly, when I say golden bangle, the word bangle is a noun. But even though the word bangle is a noun, really speaking, it does not reveal a substance at all; because there is no substance called bangle, there is only the substance called gold; bangle is a noun, but still it does not reveal a substance. If bangle is not a substance, then what does it reveal? If you analyze, Gold when it is in a particular form or shape, that shape alone is called bangle. Similarly when you say golden ring, there is no substance called ring; ring is the name of a particular shape. Similarly when you say wooden chair, there is no substance called chair; chair is the name of a particular shape alone.

Here

the name of the substance is wood alone. Similarly, bangle is a form; chain is a form, ring is a form.

So we have two examples, in example No.1, tall tree; adjective reveals property; Noun reveals substance. When I say golden bangle, adjective reveals the substance; the word bangle reveals not a substance but a particular form. That is why when form is changed, bangle is gone. Therefore the word bangle refers to the property. And therefore **Vedanta says adjectives can reveal either a property of a substance. Similarly, nouns can also reveal either a property or a substance.** Should I remind you of the four examples:

Adjective

reveals property such as Tall, fat etc.

Adjective

reveals the substance such as golden, wooden etc.

What

is the example for noun revealing the substance? Tree.

What

is the example for noun revealing the property? Bangle.

Now Vedanta comes to this world. All this is only example. Now only we are coming to the original. When I experience a world, I say here is a book, and here is a fan; and there is a wall; there is a man; there is a woman. So when I experience the world, I refer to everyone as there is a man; there is a woman, there is a table, there is a chair. What is common to all of them: It is, It is, It is, and the verb "IS" refers to the existence of the world. When I say there is a clock, it means clock is existent. When I say there is a planet, the planet is existent. Therefore, every object that I experience is existent such as: existent tree, existent man, existent woman. Whatever I experience is, existent, existent, existent.

If anything is nonexistent, then I will not experience it. Therefore everything that you experience in the world is an existent object. Everything is existent.

In

Sanskrit they say: San ghataḥ;  
san phata; sat patram; san purushaha; san or sat means,  
existent-object.

Now

when I say an existent tree, an existent man, an existent woman, etc. what is the  
noun and what is the adjective in this?

When

I say existent-man, existent-woman, table, chair, sun, moon, stars, etc. the  
word existent is adjective; and man, woman, table, chair, sun, moon, etc. are  
nouns. So the word existent is adjective and every object is a noun.

Now

Vedanta asks the  
question, if the word existent is an adjective, and if the word man, woman,  
sun, moon, etc. are nouns, tell me what type of adjective it is and what type  
of noun is it? And why this question, because previously we saw, an adjective can  
either reveal a property or it can reveal a substance.

**Generally,**

**until we come to Vedanta, our general conclusion is world is the substance and  
the word existent is an attribute or property; this will be our general  
assumption.**

Vedanta,  
however, says that is the handiwork of maya. Maya  
makes you commit a very big blunder. It makes me think that  
the word "existent",  
an adjective, is revealing an attribute and the world is the  
substance. Vedanta says that  
is not correct.

According  
to Vedanta, the word  
'existent' reveals the basic substance just as the word golden  
reveals the  
substance. It reveals a substance and the substance is called  
existence.

According to Vedanta, it is also  
called Sat Brahma. Chandoyga Upanishad begins its teaching  
with this topic. According to this  
Upanishad, the basic  
substance is existence and existence is not an attribute of an  
object, but it  
is the fundamental absolute substance. And being the  
fundamental absolute  
substance, it is invisible, it is intangible and it is the  
abstract principle.

And  
therefore according to Vedanta, the whole  
world is not a substance at all. Just as chair is not a  
substance, the desk is also  
not a substance; thus when I am touching the desk, I am not  
touching the desk  
at all, rather I am touching the wood alone.

There  
is no substance called desk; no substance called table; no  
substance called chair.  
Therefore Vedanta says world  
is nama rupa makam.

Brihadarnyaka Upanishad says, the whole world is different names, different forms and different functions; there is no substance called world. Bangle is a name, given to a particular form, to serve a particular function. If it is a bangle name and form, what is its function? To decorate the hand; If its name is chain and what is its function; decorating the neck; if it is a ring name and form, the function is decorating the finger; there is no substance called bangle, chain, ring, etc. and the substance is gold and how many gold's are there; gold is ekam, one gold alone.

Applying

this principle, **Vedanta says**

**existence is the only basic substance, and everything else is name, form and functions.**

So when you are experiencing a bangle, you are really experiencing gold alone, which is the only substance. When you are experiencing the ring, you are experiencing the gold alone, the fundamental substance. Similarly, when you are experiencing the world, you are experiencing only one fundamental substance which is inherent in all of them. That substance is IS, IS, IS, IS.

Shakaracharya

says all this, in a, one line shloka, when you are experiencing different ornaments you are experiencing gold. Similarly, when you are experiencing world, it is existence. That existence is Brahman. Therefore, we experience Brahman everywhere.

In

this experience I have a small difficulty. I am experiencing

existence with  
different names and forms (tree, chair etc). Is-ness is not  
experienced in a  
pure form. Through sense organs I experience nama rupa sat.  
Sense organs can  
reveal only nama rupa.

So,  
how can I experience pure existence? By filtering out nama  
rupa? Once you  
filter out nama rupa, only pure existence should be there. But  
if I remove nama  
rupa, sense organs can't experience existence.

How  
to do so? Close all sense organs to remove nama rupa and let  
only basic  
substance or pure existence remain. How to experience pure  
existence?

Chandogya Upanishad's 6th chapter is the most well known  
section of the entire Upanishadic literature, because it  
begins with pure existence and the student is now eager to  
know how to experience the pure existence. The teacher says:  
Oh Student, you can never experience the pure existence,  
because it is never an object of experience. Then the student  
raises his eyebrows; if I can never objectify the pure  
existence, how do I know it is there? Then the teacher gives  
the well-known statement of the Upanishad. Teacher answers,  
pure existence can't be objectified. It is nothing but you the  
Witnessing Consciousness. It is you, the Seer. Hence the  
saying, Tat Tvam Asi or Aham Brahma Asmi. My nature is  
Existence Consciousness. This is essence of Vedanta. You have  
to go on dwelling on this teaching that I am the ultimate  
substance; I am sat and I am chid; and the whole world is nama  
and rupa resting upon me.

When

this is said, it will be very difficult to swallow. And that is why scientists are not able to find because they are looking for the substance; but they are not going to come across the substance, why? **They are not able to come across the substance, because the searcher is the searched for object.** It is extremely difficult to swallow that I am the substance.

And to help us accept this truth; the Upanishad gives a well-known example, and that example is our dream experience. When I am dreaming, and seeing varieties of objects giving me happiness, giving me sorrow, giving me fear, what does it mean?

Dream is capable of frightening you. And imagine you are in a dream and you are seeing terrible things and in the dream a dream guru comes and tells: you do not be frightened of all these things; you are the essence of this dream world, the dream has come out of you, the dream is resting on you, on waking up the dream will resolve; if he says this in the dream, it is unbelievable. It is so realistic. But on waking up, he knows there is no dream river, dream man, dream object; none of them exist separate from me-the-waker. Vedanta tells us that world is just another dream channel.

Now it is unbelievable; it is very difficult to accept that I am the substance, but the ultimate truth is I (not this body, because body is also part of this world only), I, the witness, sakshi chaitanyam; I am the substance of the dream world; **Similarly, during the time of our ignorance, it is unbelievable, it is difficult to accept that I am the substance; but according to Vedanta, I am the salt of the earth. And that I is Brahman, that Brahman is existent and that existent Brahman alone appears as the world with different nama rupa. And when Brahman, the existence, the only substance, appears with different nama Rupa's, it is called**

Vishva rupa Ishvara. It is the name of Brahman, the existence, which is along with all the names and forms. Therefore, the one Brahman alone has become you, me, that and this, etc. This is the teaching here.

The

Shloka says: That existence pervades everything. As we used Is to describe an object. It has eye, head, face; it is everywhere with ears, it pervades surroundings, everything.

### **Shloka # 15:**

**Shining through the functions of all the organs, (yet) devoid of all the organs; unattached, and verily the supporter of all; without ality, and the perceiver of alities;**

All the sense organs are revealing that Brahman all the time; for example, the eyes can reveal only colors; they cannot reveal sound; ears reveal only sound; and when I experience sound, I do not experience colors; When I experience colors, I do not experience smell; Therefore Shabda, sparsha, etc. are mutually exclusive; shabda comes sparsha is not there, rupam comes, sparsha is not there; but all the sense organs experience one thing commonly. It is that sound IS: when you hear, sound IS: Similarly, when you use the eye, the form IS: therefore all sensory operations, uniformly reveal that Brahman alone, all sensory operations uniformly reveal that Brahman alone in the form of shabda san, sparsha san, rupam sat, etc. But the problem is you are attracted by nama rupa, and you lose sight of the inherent existence in all of them. Therefore, what should you do to experience Brahman? Sri Krishna says, you are experiencing Brahman alone every moment. When you say, shabda IS, sparsha IS, rupam IS. But because of mixture, because of mixing up of nama and rupa, we are absorbed in nama rupa and lose sight of this fundamental truth

and therefore we require a sensitive and subtle intellect to appreciate that.

**Take away:**

As you go deeper and deeper, the visible becomes the invisible. The tangible becomes the intangible. The concrete becomes the abstract. Therefore we come to know that the ultimate substance must be intangible, formless and abstract substance.

Vedanta says

existence is the only basic substance, and everything else is name, form and functions.

Scientists

are not able to come across the substance, because the searcher is the searched for object.

During

the time of our ignorance, it is unbelievably difficult to accept that I am the substance; but according to Vedanta, I am the salt of the earth.

**With Best Wishes,**

**Ram Ramaswamy**