

Baghawad Gita, Chapter 14

Summary

Continuing his teachings

Swamiji presented the summary of the chapter today. He said the 14th chapter, like the previous chapter, falls within the third shadkam of the

Bhagavat Gita; the third

group of six chapters and I had

pointed out that in the third shadkam,

Sri Krishna concentrates on Gyana yoga. And therefore we find the topic of Gyana yoga, the essential teachings of the Upanishads,

condensed in these chapters, especially the 13th, 14th and 15th chapters. In

the 16th and 17th chapters, we will see later, Sri Krishna deals with Gyana-yoga friendly virtues.

Gyana yoga is the pursuit of self-knowledge or atma Gyanam. Though, these three chapters are relatively small, they are very significant chapters and this is known as Gunathraya vibhaga yoga and in this chapter, Sri Krishna deals with the three gunas as the stepping-stones and through these three gunas he takes us to the gunathitha atma. Using the three gunas as stepping stones and going to the gunathitha atma, is the subject matter of this chapter and therefore, it is called guna thraya vibhaga yoga.

Shlokas

1-4:

And in the first four verses of this chapter, Sri Krishna gives an introduction in which he mentions the subject matter of atma Gyanam as the liberating wisdom and therefore the greatest knowledge. All the other disciplines of knowledge are

called apara vidya; inferior knowledge; whereas this is the knowledge, which is called para vidya in the upanishad and raja vidya in the 9th chapter; this knowledge is the greatest knowledge because this alone releases a person from samsara. All the other disciplines of knowledge will make me only smaller and smaller because the more I study I come to know how little I know. So instead of growing bigger in terms of knowledge, I only feel smaller and smaller as I study more, further. This is the only wisdom, which makes me own the fact that, I am Brahman, the biggest. Therefore, Sri Krishna says this is a liberating knowledge, which gives liberation while living and is called jivan-mukti; and it also gives liberation after death, which is then called videh mukti. And by videha mukti we mean freedom from punarjanma or cycle of birth and death.

Thus

having introduced the subject matter, later Sri Krishna gives the foundation for the teaching and in that foundation he briefly mentions the process of creation.

He points out that God is the cause of the creation, and God consists of two aspects, consciousness aspect and the matter aspect or Chetana and achetana.

In

the 7th chapter, Chetana tatvam was called para prakrti; achetana tatvam was called apara prakrti.

In

the 13th chapter, Chetana tatvam was called purusha and achetana tatvam is called prakrti.

And

in the upanishads, chetana tatvam is

called brahman and the achetana
tatvam is called Maya.

These two principles together are called Ishvara and he is anadi and from this Chetana- achetana mishram alone the entire universe has originated, including every individual as well. And from this we can easily infer that every individual also must be a mixture of Chetana – achetana tatvam because as the cause is, so the effect will be. As the parents are so the children will be. So based on the same principle, I, the individual, is also a mixture of purusha and prakrti; brahman and maya; chetanam and achetanam. Otherwise, technically, I am atma-anatma mishraha.

And

from this we can infer that anatma
is a part of the mind, which is born out of prakrti, as such
it will have the
three gunas, which
belong to prakrti.

So

prakrti is responsible for the origination of my anatma part
and
therefore; my anatma part will
have three gunas and that anatma part is the
body-mind complex, otherwise also called ahamkara. So the
body-mind complex is equal
to the anatma part is
equal to the ahamkara
part, which is sagunaha, endowed with
the three gunas, because it
is a product, originating from the prakrti.

And

similarly I have got a purusha aspect also; the chetana aspect
also; which is called the atma
aspect; which is nirgunam

in nature and this nirguna
atma is technically
called sakshi. **Therefore saguna ahamkara plus nirguna sakshi;
Saguna matter plus nirguna consciousness,
is the individual.**

Saguna means with guna or properties and nirguna means without
guna; or properties or attributes. The pure ahamkara also
cannot interact in the world. Pure sakshi also cannot interact
in the world. All the interactions are done by the mixture of
sakshi + ahamkara.

And

the whole aim of this teaching is I should learn to own up
more and more of my higher
sakshi svarupam, which is
the persistent and permanent nature of mine and I should not
be over obsessed
with my inferior ahamkara
materialistic nature. Not that ahamkara should be neglected,
because without ahamkara, pure sakshi cannot transact.
So ahamkara is needed;
but obsession
with ahamkara will lead to
all types of problem. And therefore instead of seeing myself
as ahamkara, I should
learn to see myself as sakshi, now
transacting through ahamkara.
For this purpose, Sri Krishna talked about the creation and
the essence of this
topic is, I am also a mixture of saguna and nirguna
aspects.

And having presented this foundation, Sri Krishna begins the
teaching from the 5th verse onwards. He talks about the three
gunas of ahamkara, to show that all the three gunas are causes
of bondage; we need to know how to make use of them properly,

like anything in the creation. If I know how to handle things, it can help me grow; if I do not know how to handle, the very same thing will cause problems.

You

take fire, it is a blessing or a curse; it depends upon whether I know how to handle fire. Electricity is a blessing or curse? By itself it is neither; but if I do not know how to handle it, it becomes a curse. Similarly, the three gunas also; if I do not know how to make use of them, they can become binding chains. Word Guna has a second meaning, they is 'ropes' or "chains" that bind me.

Shloka's 5-18

(Analysis of Ahamkara)

And

therefore I should have a thorough understanding of the three gunas. So from 5th verse, up to 18th verse, we get an analysis of the three gunas, essentially an analysis of the ahamkara; **because ahamkara has the three gunas.** And for the convenience of our study, Sri Krishna classifies this analysis into five parts.

First he gives the lakshanam or definition of the three gunas.

Second he gives the mode of bondage; how each guna binds us. This is called bandana prakaraha.

Third, he gives the

lingam, indication
to find out which guna
is dominant in me.

Fourth is Gathi,
which means post-death travel; the travel after life.

Fifth is phalam, the
consequences of the predominance of each guna.

Sri
Krishna gives the definitions: satva is prakashatmakam; rajas
is raghatmakam, tamas
is mohanatmakam.

Satva
is that disposition of the mind, which makes the mind
knowledge friendly. So
satva makes the mind endowed with that disposition, which is
knowledge
friendly, which makes the mind a bright mind;

So
he is disposed to the acquisition of knowledge; whereas rajo
guna makes the
mind karma friendly; activity friendly; a disposition, which
is suited for
dynamism.

Whereas tamo guna makes the mind unfit for, inimical to both
others, thus it is neither knowledge friendly nor activity
friendly. Such a disposition of mind is called Satva, rajas
and tamas are propensity-based definition that indicate
disposition of one's mind.

Then
the next one is the mode of bondage. How does it bind? When my
mind is knowledge
friendly, naturally I become a bookworm; all the time

interested in operating
the Gyanendriyas; not karmendriya-active
person; and therefore I look for an infrastructure, which is
conducive to more
and more study.

A
learning person will first look for those things. This
becomes a bondage when such a conducive
atmosphere is not available; then this person becomes restless
and unhappy. This
is the bondage caused by satva guna.

Whereas
rajo guni does not like
library or knowledge.

He
wants to do a lot of things; and therefore he looks for
activity friendly
atmosphere; and, when such an atmosphere is there; that mind
is very happy and
if that is not there he becomes mad.

And
tamo Guna is looking for sleep and if it is not available he
gets mad.

These
are the three types of bandana prakaraha.

Then
the lingam, the
indication of the three gunas;
this is a corollary we get from the previous discussions.

When
satva is dominant then Gyanam increases; reading increases;
study increases; thinking

increases; it is an indication of satva vritti.

Whereas

when activity increases, it is an indication of rajo vritti and when

sleep and sleepy condition increases, it is an indication of tamo vritti.

And then Sri Krishna talked about the gathi after death. When a Satva dominant person dies he goes to higher lokas; when a Rajas dominant person dies he is born in the manushya loka; because manushya loka is meant for Karma. When tamo guna dominant person dies that person goes down; hence, urdhva gathi, madhyama gathi and adho gathi.

And

finally, the consequences of these three gumas were also pointed out; that is the phalam or the consequences in this life. When satva guna increases, Gyana vridhhi occurs; when rajo guna increases, the ambition and activities increase; and when tamo guna increases,

nidra and negligence

in life increases and his life will be closer to an animal. So thus, all five topics Sri Krishna discusses from the 5th verse up to 18th.

Shlokas 19 and

20

And then comes the crucial two verses #19 and 20, in which Sri Krishna talks about transcending the three gunas. And for transcending the three gunas one will have to make use of the three gunas. Just as a fruit requires skin for ripening and once it is ripened, it does not require the skin and naturally the skin is shed.

Similarly,

the entire spiritual sadhana is a gradual

journey from tama pradhana
life to raja pradhana
life to satva pradhana
life to gunathitha life. And
how does the scripture accomplish that? The scripture
prescribes lot of karma
to a person who is now tama pradhana. And what type of karmas?
It prescribes Sakama karma.

Selfish

activities to fulfill worldly and materialistic desires; In
fact scriptures
encourage such desires; because it wants to inject desires in
the tamoguna person, who
is always sleepy and refuses to get up and wants to make him
rajo guni.

And

once a person has got into sakama
karma, then the scriptures, gradually change his status.

At

first his rajo
guna is tamo guna or tainted
rajo guna, the first
phase. Then satva guna
tainted rajo guna should be the
next phase.

What is the difference between the two? Both rajo gunas will
activate a person. It will make the person extremely
ambitious; it will whip up the ambition but the difference
will be initially all desires are personal and selfish-
oriented; that means the beneficiary of my activity will be
only I, or my family.

Whereas

when that rajo

guna is converted
to the higher rajo guna, sakama karma will
be converted into nishkama karma, which
means the beneficiaries of my activity will be more and more
people. Not only my
family alone, but also others will also be benefited.

As the beneficiaries increase, sakama karma is getting
converted into nishkama karma. This is travel from tamoguna;
from lower rajo guna to higher rajo guna. To use the 4th
chapter language, one goes from guna shudra to guna vaishya to
guna kshatriya. Guna kshatriya is a person whose life and
activities will benefit the entire community and even the
nation.

Once a person has lived a guna kshatriya life, which is
otherwise called karma yoga, then the scriptures ask you to
graduate you to the next stage of a satva guna pradhana life;
after the peak of activity, gradually one has to withdraw;
from Grihastha ashrama to vanaprastha ashrama may occur

And at this stage alone, the scriptures talk about more of
upasana and less of karma. So upasana is the sadhana which
converts an extroverted active person into a quiet and
withdrawn; and self or atma oriented person. Thus, upasana
sadhana makes me a satva pradhana purusha.

When

I become a satva pradhana purusha, the
activities are gradually dropped, and one does not feel any
guilt because he
has contributed to the society sufficiently.

He

is not a selfish person he has contributed for so many years.
Now he can turn to concentrated spirituality. And not only
that,
physically also, this person becomes incapable of more

activity, by this time.

Thus tama pradhana to raja pradhana to satva pradhana he has reached; by following karma yoga and upasana.

Then, the satva guna to nirguna travel, is a totally different type of travel. There is no corridor connecting satva guna

and nirguna. Tamo **guna**

can be changed to rajo guna, rajo

guna

can be changed to satva guna; but, satva guna can never be converted into nirguna. If satva guna

is converted, it will again become tamo guna

or rajo guna only. There is no corridor connecting guna

thraya and Nirguna or gunathita and therefore the only sadhana available is

Gyanam.

So after a person becomes a satva guna pradhana, karma yoga is dropped, upasana is dropped, because they have done their job by making me satva guna pradhana. In fact satva guna pradhana person is called sadhana chatushtaya sampanna adhikari. Then he has to move to Gyana yoga. That Sri Krishna tells us clearly.

As I said the crucial word in that 19th verse is Vetti; meaning,

he comes to know. And Sri Krishnadoes not say how to get the knowledge, because he has already said

that in the 4th chapter. Knowledge does not automatically happen. No knowledge, for that matter, can happen

naturally. If you sit quietly in

meditation, knowledge does not happen. Then, what should you do?

Gyanina

yoga means going

to a guru. sthrothriya brahmanishta
guru means systematic study of the Vedanta. Not a casual now
and then listening to some satsanga here and
there, and all of them are meant to inspire you, inspiration
is different;
teaching is different. Dayananda Swamiji says: **Preaching is
different; teaching is different.**

And
systematic study of scriptures includes shravanam,
mananam and nidhidyasanam,
for a length of time, and there afterwards removing all the
doubts by proper
mananam or analysis and thereafter internalization of the
teaching. So through shravna, manana
and nidhidhyasana, I become
gunathitha.

Now the question is: How do I become gunathitha by shravanam?
As I said, the body, mind complex will be eternally saguna, it
would not become nirguna. Then what do I do through Gyana
yoga? **I learn to dis-identify from the body by knowing the
fact that body is only an incidental instrument I am using for
worldly transactions exactly like the spectacle and when I
remove the spectacles, I am not gone, but I am not able to see
the people, similarly when the body mind complex is not there,
I do not disappear, but I also do not have the medium to
interact with the people;** and we do experience such a
situation daily; When; during the deepsleep state. And in
sleep the body mind complex is temporarily used and then it
will be dropped, I should take the instrument as myself.

Then,
if I am not the body mind complex, who am I? For that Sri
Krishna gave the
answer:

in Shloka 14:

20.

I am not the body, but I am the experiencer of the body; I am not the mind; I am the experiencer of the mind; and therefore, all the known attributes belong to the known body mind complex only. This is a very important law. You should remember. Any experienced attribute, belong to the experienced object. If I see green color, the color belongs to the eye or the object? The seen color belongs to the seen object; it does not belong to the seer eye. Whatever color I am seeing, they all belong to the objectified-attribute that belong to the objectified-substances; no attribute belongs to the objectifier-I. **And therefore all the gunas belong to the body mind complex. "I" am free from all the three gunas.** So you do not contact the gunathitha atma, you do not become the gunathitha atma, you own up the fact that I was gunathitha; I am gunathitha, and I will be gunathitha. For how many days, will I be Gunathitha? I am incapable of becoming saguna. So this transformation in the I takes place and this knowledge based transformation is called mokshaha or jivan mukti.

So after death, will I have urdhva gathi or madhyama gathi or atho gathi? If I have satva guna I will have urdhva gathi; if I have rajo guna I will have madhya gathi; if I have tamo guna I will have atho gathi. However, if I am Nirguna, I will have no gathi. Aham agathihi asmi. I am agathihi, because I cannot move from one place to another, because **I am the atma, the chaitanyam, which is all pervading, in Me the consciousness, the saguna matter appears and in Me the consciousness the saguna matter resolves. And I am never affected by the three gunas. This is called moksha.**

And

naturally Arjuna is curious to know what will be the lifestyle of such a gunathitha person, and therefore he asked three questions in the 21st verse,

Shloka 14:21:

The three questions are: What are the indications of the gunathitha? Characteristics of gunathitha and then what is the conduct of the gunathitha: acharaha, and the method of becoming gunathithah.

And

Sri Krishna gives the answer, the indication is that the very knowledge makes the mind less and less reactive to the situation because the mind has become an enlightened mind and an enlightened mind learns to have the right attitude towards the saguna creation. And what is the right attitude? Understanding that the proportion of the gunas varies from individual to individual therefore no human being can be like me. And therefore there is no question of compatibility. So looking for compatibility is the worst thing that you can do and even if by chance there is any compatibility between two persons, it cannot be for long, because both have dynamic and changing mind; and therefore differences are natural in anatma. Association and dissociation are natural in anatma. Birth, growth, declension and death are natural in anatma. And therefore I cannot change the anatma, I should only change my attitude. And this changing of the attitude takes place gradually only because the old behavior continues.

And through Nidhidhyasanam, which is called dwelling upon the teaching; I reduce my reactions gradually. Now, when the reactions reduce, knowledge does not improve; Knowledge does not become brighter, but knowledge seems to improve, because

the reactions are decreasing. Just like on a purnami day, the moon seems to be brighter and brighter in the evening, but you know that moon is not becoming brighter but as the sunlight recedes, sunlight is an obstacle to the brightness of the moon; As the sun light recedes, the moon seems to be brighter and brighter; similarly my reactions come down as a result of the assimilation; as a result nidhidhyasanam.

And

as I had said before, we can see the decrease in reaction at three levels: frequency of unhealthy reactions, like frustration, like fear, like insecurity, anger, etc. the frequency of these comes down. Do not expect a flashy transformation. It is not going to happen immediately. It is a gradual assimilation.

Not

only frequency comes down, the intensity of the reactions also come down. The decrease in the intensity occurs at three levels; manasam, vachikam, and kayikam. That is why when there is extreme reaction, there is butterfly in the stomach. Before writing an examination, the stomach may get upset and with it mind, speech and body as well. Therefore Arjuna, mental intensity comes down and later even verbal and physical reactions come down.

So

this is reduction in intensity and finally there is a reduction in the recovery period also; previously once I got angry it continued for days; but now it comes down in hours; and then it comes down to minutes; then it comes down to

seconds; so I get a mental resilience to bounce back, even though I reacted violently, I am able to forget that and continue with my life. So thus nidhidhyasanam, converts Gyanam into Gyana nishta, reducing the violent reaction. But we should remember, reactions can never become zero. Zero reactions are only in the case of a table, the chair, etc. they do not have it; they do not get angry. So our mind is a live mind; therefore we can reduce the frequency, intensity, recovery period, but it can never become zero. Once I reach this state my meditation or nidhidhyasanam becomes slightly different; and that nidhidhyasanam is that I should not be too much obsessed with the mind and its reactions; because to be over obsessed with the mind, is again identification with the mind. That is ahamkara; and therefore, I reduce the reaction and thereafterwards, I learn to distance from my mind, and I do not worry too much about the reacting mind. That is reaction to the reaction.

So every Gita student has to face two reactions; one is the natural reaction to the situation; and the second is reaction to the fact that I reacted, leading to depression.

So, after a some time, I drop my secondary reactions as well; I am not over-obsessed with the reaction of the mind. And I say that I do not have any reaction because I am now the witness of the reacting mind. So one should first reduce the reactions and then give up the reactions to the reactions.

Shlokas 22-27:

This
is called Gyana nishta
that Sri Krishna tells us about in verses 22 to 27. In the
22nd verses, he is
talking about the absence of reaction to the reaction. In one
of the guru
purnima talks, I have dealt with this topic very, elaborately.
Reaction to the
reaction is a greater samsara
and a Gyani does not react to the reaction. And thereafter as
a Gyana nishta I
am not obsessed with my mind and its tendencies.

And
then the second question was how does he conduct himself in
life. Sri Krishna emphasizes
that the Gyani has equanimity of the mind; his mind is free
from violent
reactions and even if there are small reactions, he does not
react to those
reactions. So samatvam is his acharaha.

Final
question of Arjuna was how to become gunathitha? The answer is
Knowledge is gained
with the bhakthi to the Lord; surrender to the Lord and by the
grace of the Lord.
May you get Gyanam and that Gyanam is the only solution.

Through Bhakthi you do not get liberation. Through bhakthi you
get a conducive atmosphere for knowledge and a conducive
personality as well; and then through knowledge you will
attain mokshaha. So with this the answers to Arjuna's question
are complete and the 14th chapter is over.

Take Away:

Ahamkara has the
three gunas.

Therefore
saguna ahamkara plus nirguna sakshi; Saguna matter plus
nirguna
consciousness, is the individual.

Dayananda
Swamiji says: Preaching is different; teaching is different.

I
learn to dis-identify from the body by knowing the fact that
body is only an
incidental instrument I am using for worldly transactions
exactly like the
spectacle and when I remove the spectacles, I am not gone, but
I am not able to
see the people, similarly when the body mind complex is not
there, I do not
disappear, but I also do not have the medium to interact with
the people;

I
am the atma, the
chaitanyam, which is all pervading, in Me the consciousness,
the saguna matter
appears and in Me the consciousness the saguna matter
resolves. And I am never affected by the three gunas. This is
called moksha.

**With Best
Wishes,**

Ram Ramaswamy