

Baghawad Gita, Class 198: Chapter 16, Verse 1

CHAPTER – 16: Yoga

of division of attributes, divine and demoniac.

Greetings,

Continuing his teachings Swamiji said, having completed the 15th chapter, now we will enter into the 16th chapter of the Gita. The two chapters 16th and 17th have a subject matter, which is different from the main subject matter of the previous three chapters, 13th, 14th, and 15th respectively.

There

is a shift in Sri Krishna's teaching. And this shift in the subject matter is based

on a very important principle and that principle is that the goal of life of a

person; a person's goal of life and a person's way of life, both of them are

closely related. The way of life and the goal of life; when I say goal, the

primary top most goal of life, these two are closely connected; each one will

influence the other; **the goal of life**

will influence my way of life, and my way of life in turn will influence my

goal of life also. Therefore, these two things cannot be separated and

therefore, if a person wants to successfully accomplish his goal of life, he

has to take into account his very way of life also. One cannot ignore the way

of life, and fix the goal of life alone. One should pay attention to the way of

life, and ensure, that there is alignment between the way and the goal.

The way of life should be conducive to the accomplishment of the goal. This our scriptures consider as very important. You cannot hope to lead any way of life, and yet hope to accomplish goal of Life. Just as the environment and the type of plant, both are interconnected. You cannot grow any type of plant in any type of atmosphere. It is impossible; both are interconnected.

And therefore, the Veda purva bhaga, the beginning portion of the Vedas concentrate upon the way of life while the final portion of the Veda, the Vedanta concentrates on the goal of life. Indian culture can never be understood without keeping Vedanta in mind. And, therefore, Sri Krishna feels that he has talked about the spiritual goal of life; He has talked about the self-knowledge as the goal of life, in the 13th, 14th and 15th chapters, and now he feels that His teaching is complete only when He talks about the complimentary part; viz., the way of life, which is conducive and which will promote the goal that He has presented in the previous chapters. Therefore, previous three chapters deal with the goal, these two chapters, 16th and the 17th deal with the way of life, because they cannot be separated.

And the way of life, a person leads is heavily determined by the character that a person possesses. The way of life is heavily influenced by, determined by, controlled by, directed by, the character, the personality, the make-up of an individual.

Therefore character determines the way of life, and the way of life will determine the goal of life. Therefore all these three are inter-connected; Character, Way and Goal. And trying to tamper one alone, without taking into account the other two, will be a lopsided approach, which will not be successful. All the three, we should take into account. And

based on this, our scriptures divide the character of the human being. Our scriptures have made a thorough study of the possible human characters; because character will determine life, which will in turn, determine the goal.

And this human character is divided into several types in different contexts; sometimes they classify into four types; sometimes they classify into three types; sometimes they classify into two types; different classifications are there, depending upon the context. And for our study, we will see the three-fold classification of human character. The three-fold classification of human character is:

The first classification is called dvesha pradhana svabhava, a character in which lot of dvesha or dislike is predominant. We do not know why; it may be because of purva janma; it may be because of present janma; it may be because of the childhood experiences; it may be because of the parental upbringing; it may be because of the friendship; whatever be the cause, that we do not study now, one type of character is dominantly dvesha pradhana; a character in which I dislike most of the things. I have complaint almost against everything, almost a cynical character. I have complaints against the government system; complaint against family members; complaint against television; and complaint against God as well.

And this dvesha pradhana character, as he accumulates this dvesha, because one is not able to express outside, because of suppression, parental suppression where child was asked to shut up often; the child has lot of complaints but could not express. And this accumulated dvesha leads to lot of anger suppressed inside; anger against everything. So dvesha pradhana character is generally krodha pradhana character and this leads to himsa pradhana character; a person who is highly short tempered, highly volatile. Even the smallest incidents will cause an earthquake or volcano. The shastra class it rakshasa svabhava. Why does the shastra call this rakshasa svabhava? Because when a person is so volatile and short

tempered, about to explode all the time, what will be the attitude of other people? Do the other people love to come near him; or will they try to run away from him? Try to avoid him at all cost. Swamiji says that in some houses, when the father comes from office, all the children say: appa has come, let us go inside; as though volcano is coming; In some cases, it may be an amma as well. So therefore, rakshasa svabhava is that svabhava from which people want to protect themselves; hence called rakshasa. It is derived from raksha to protect; a svabhava, from which people would love to run away. This is called dvesha pradhana svabhava.

It is generally, insensitive to others' feelings. Generally, rude and gross minded and generally goes on hurting people, often without awareness about it.

This character is not conducive to spiritual growth and still worse; this character brings a person down spiritually. It leads to spiritual regression. Not progression.

Then comes the second character is Raga pradhana svabhava. An svabhava, which is heavily raga-oriented; attachment oriented; which leads to lot of kama; lot of desires; what type of desire? Desire for name, fame, money, possession, position, revelry and merry making. Life is meant for enjoyment and therefore, they have no goal. It is a let go philosophy. They do not harm others; but they like raga and kama and this svabhava are also supposed to be unconducive to spiritual progress, because a person does not have time or inclination to turn inwards. Raga pradhana svabhava is an extrovert; all the time bothered about these few little things like my status, etc.

And this svabhava does not lead to spiritual downfall, because this person does not harm others. But this person or character will lead to spiritual stagnation. There is no downfall; but there is no scope for spiritual growth because generally, these people do not consider religion and spirituality is relevant for life. They wonder for earning money and enjoying life why do we require God. One lady was telling that she wanted to bring her husband also to Gita classes. And that person argued it seems: Religion is meant for the weak minded and sick minded people; I am healthy and fine; I do not have any problem at all; why are you unnecessarily introducing me to all these things? Most of these people, belonging to the second variety, they are harmless, even well behaved, and good mannered but they tend to be nasthikas. They consider religion is not required; Vedanta is not required to lead a comfortable and happy life. In fact, they may even go one step further and say religion is a problem. According to them, religion and spirituality contributes to only problems in society. In fact, they feel if they are banned or abolished; it is better. This is the second variety. They are Materialistic people, in simple language. They won't negate God often; but they feel God is not relevant to our life. Spirituality is not relevant, scriptures are not relevant; it does not appeal to them. And in fact, most of our youngsters are tending to this alone.

There was an article, somebody gave me, in Indian Express it seems, whether it was fact or fiction, I do not know. A couple had visited a family and it is in connection with some marriage proposal and after the visit, the couple had gone, this girl says, I do not want to get married to this family at all. Why; because they are all Talibans, Afghan Muslim fundamentalists. This girl's parents were shocked; why are you calling them Talibans? The reason is that both the parents have come with lot of religious marks on their forehead. Our children do not believe in it. They think that it is religious fanaticism. And that girl argued that because of these clear cut religious marks alone, we are dividing the society as

Hindus, Christians, Muslims and it is only causing, division, disparity and quarrel, therefore why do we require it. Simple application of the vibhuthi or kumkum, the younger generation looks upon as religious fundamentalism. It may be a fiction, but what I want to say is the tendency of the next generation. This is raga pradhana svabhava and they are not bad or evil or immoral. They are wonderful children; thinking children, but they end up as materialistic people; totally away from our culture, which is a non-materialistic culture. This is the second group of people and Sri Krishna calls them asura svabhava. Asura does not mean people with tusks and horns, and all; it is derived from asusu ramante iti asuraha. asusu means the sense organs. Ramante means revellery. Asurah means a person or a society or a group, which values sensory revelry; noise making, merry making alone. So this is asura svabhava. These people will not fall down in spirituality; but there is no scope for spiritual growth. Therefore the second character leads to spiritual stagnation while first one that leads to spiritual regression or downfall.

Then

comes the third character, which is Gyana pradhana. Which considers spiritual knowledge as the goal. That is why a child is initiated into Sandhya vandhana mantras, for knowledge. And knowledge, especially the spiritual knowledge, is symbolized, as lamp in our culture and therefore lighting the lamp is the first thing that we do, whatever be the undertaking. Early morning starts with lighting the lamp. Any function starts with lighting the lamp; even the so-called secular functions such as Film festivals. They show all violence, but the cinema actors come nicely dressed, showing all the 32 teeth's and they light the lamp,

because even when India turns materialistic, spirituality cannot be taken away from India. Therefore, Gyana pradhana, those who consider that Gyanam is the top priority and whatever is required for that Gyanam that also is top priority. Not that they dislike money or name or fame; it is not they are against them, but they never think of that; at the cost of spiritual growth. Keeping in mind the spiritual growth, whatever can be accomplished, whatever entertainment is there; or music, dance; the whole family can watch the dance, because the theme is Krishna, Bhagavatham, Ramayanam; and the Jivatma, pining for Paramatma; that is our dance theme, and the lyrics also written by saints and sages. There is a scope for all, but it is in keeping with spirituality, similarly, in dance. There is program called deepa pradakshinam as is Radha Kalyanam. Alternatively Overnight pubs are also coming up.

In our culture we have dancing and singing all centered on spirituality. It is Gyana pradhana way of life; that is the third svabhava; and Sri Krishna calls them daiva svabhava.

Daiva svabhava: means it stands for knowledge, wisdom and brightness.

So, these are the three svabhavas; deva or daiva; asura; and rakshasa svabhava. All these three characters are compared to a wealth that a person possesses. All these three people possess their own wealth, in the form of these characters. And

these characters are compared to wealth because with that character, they can buy; they can accomplish their goals. How? Character decides the way of life. Way of life, decides the goal; therefore character purchases your goal. And therefore it is called sampath.

Therefore in the 16th chapter, Krishna wants to talk about daivi

sampath; otherwise called daiva svabhava; which is the inner wealth of character; which will accomplish a particular type of goal; then, asuri

sampath or asura svabhava, the 2nd type of inner wealth or character,

which will purchase another type of goal. And the third one is rakshasi

sampathi.

And having presented the three characters or inner wealths, Sri Krishna

wants to say:

O Arjuna, if your goal is spiritual knowledge, or moksha, the only conducive way is daiva svabhava. If you do not value, spiritual knowledge, I have nothing more to tell.

But Sri Krishna says if you value spiritual knowledge, if you value

Moksha

then the way of life, which is in alignment, which is conducive to it is daiva

svabhava. Therefore you have to take into account, your way of life,

every small or big thing that you do, right from the food that you eat, right

from the entertainment that you have, right from the type of magazine that you

read, right from the TV programs that you watch, right from the type of the

friends you move with, right from the type of the way you spend your leisure time. Every minute thing contributes to the way of life, which is in the long-term going to determine the goal; whether you reach it or not.

And therefore Arjuna! I have talked about the goal;

I have talked about the Veda anta bhaga;
better let Me talk about the Veda purva
bhaga

also, because Veda purva and Veda anta are inseparably interconnected and therefore the 16th and 17th chapters deal with the way of life conducive to this spiritual goal. And the subject matter is picked from the Veda purva bhaga. The previous three chapters are about Veda anta bhaga. These two chapters are about Veda purva bhaga. With this background, we will enter into the chapter.

Shloka

16.1:

**16.1 The Blessed Lord said Fearlessness,
purity of mind, persistence in knowledge and yoga, charity and
control of the
external organs, sacrifice, (scriptural) study, austerity and
recititude;**

Sri Krishna begins the teaching, even without Arjuna's asking for it, because he feels that this teaching is complete only when he talks about this topic.

Atma Gyanam can work only when a particular way of life is

adhered to. That is why culture becomes very important. And in the olden days, when they glorified our culture, and banned our people from mixing with other cultures, it is not because, we look down upon other cultures, every culture is beautiful, but we had values, because this culture is designed for a particular goal. Others are designed for their particular other goals. There is no inferior or superior culture; but what you want in your life, and therefore Sri Krishna feels the teaching is complete, only when the way of life is also prescribed. Therefore in these three verses, he gives a list of virtues or traits, that are conducive to Vedantic study, initially, and later conducive to Vedantic assimilation. Both are equally important; reception of knowledge is important; assimilation of knowledge is equally important, only after reception and assimilation, transformation can take place. And therefore he gives a list of virtues called daivi sampath. And they are not new; Sri Krishna has talked about them, in the thirteenth chapter; from verse No.8 to 12th.

In the four or five verses, Sri Krishna even gave a name to those virtues, the name of Gyanam.

So the lists of virtues are as follows. The first virtue that Sri Krishna emphasizes is said abhayam. Abhayam means courage. Self-confidence. Faith in myself; faith in God is important; faith in Guru is important, faith in the scriptures is important, but above all, faith in myself that I can follow and accomplish. **This self-confidence is important because spiritual life is an adventure. It is a greater adventure than reaching Everest, than going to Artic circle or Antartic circle.** So many adventures are there; but this is the greatest

adventure; the most challenging adventure. And therefore, it requires tremendous inner courage or inner strength.

Mundaka Upanishad says:

A man who does not have the inner courage cannot succeed in spirituality, and therefore it is an adventure or challenge. And a person can continue with perseverance only when he appreciates its value, which is not that easy. Value of money you can easily appreciate. Even a child knows that. Value of position everybody knows. Value of possessions everybody knows. Value of power, everybody knows.

If

I have to perseveringly continue I should know the worth of spiritual goal. And

since this requires lot of inner maturity, it is a very rarely understood thing.

Most of the people do not know its value; therefore most of the people will not

vote for this; Sri Krishna said in the 7th chapter that we are in the minority.

Spiritual seekers all are always in minority, and therefore the spiritual

journey is often a lonely journey. Therefore it requires tremendous courage to continue.

Therefore,

Abhayam, means self-confidence, courage to continue in spite of obstacles and

in spite of being in a minority. How to get Abhayam? One is, once I have a

value for the goal, I would not mind the obstacles. **So the size of the obstacle will depend upon the value for the goal that you have.**

If the value is lukewarm, the obstacles appear bigger, and if the value is intense, the obstacles

will appear smaller. Obstacles do not have a size of its own; the size and the

weight are determined by your subjective projections. There are people who go to Everest while there are people who hesitate even to walk to the bus stand if there is a little rain.

Therefore one method of discovering courage is learning to appreciate the value of the goal.

Courage will come from somewhere. The second is of course, surrender to the Lord; seeking strength from the Lord.

Imagine a person who becomes a sanyasi, without having any security around him. It is surrender to Lord that gave him courage. And therefore through Bhakthi and Viveka one has to discover abhayam, fearlessness.

The next virtue is satvasamshuddhi. Purity of mind, Satva here means antakaranam, samshuddhi means purity. And what do you mean by purity; these are types of thoughts that keep the mind healthy. Those which are not toxic to the mind or mental health; just as for the physical body, we have got items which are conducive to health and which are not conducive.

For the mind, the toxic ones are, certain patterns of thinking; certain types of thoughts like jealousy; hatred, fear; These are all toxic thoughts, which if they remain in the mind for longer time, they will cause erosion and make the mind weaker. And therefore satvasamshuddhi means maintenance of healthy thoughts.

Then

the next virtue is Gyanayogavyasthiti.

In and through all this way of life, you should not forget what is the goal or

purpose for which this way of life I am following that is spiritual knowledge.

And knowledge never happens naturally; knowledge never happens naturally. Many

other things happen in time, you need not work for it; wrinkles, you did not

work; just survive; wrinkles will come; grey hair; you need not work, it will

come; Tooth loss, you do not require a sadhana;

it will come. Many things will happen in time; **knowledge is one thing, which can never naturally happen;** any

knowledge including physics knowledge does not happen in time it is a separate

pursuit you should undertake; you require a physics guru, a physics book and

you have to study and only then physics knowledge comes.

The word bhododayam

should not be misunderstood; Buddha got bhododayam,

Buddha got enlightenment under bodhi tree and many people sincerely believe that knowledge

happens; either a leaf might fall, or a fruit might fall, knowledge will not

fall or descend down, you have to work and work hard.

Therefore

Sri Krishna says: committed pursuit of Gyana yoga, which means sravanam, which is

consistent and systematic study of the Vedantic

scriptures for a length of time, under the guidance of a competent teacher.

Therefore, sravanam, then

mananam, reflecting over that and understanding and removing doubts and nidhidyanam,

internalizing to such an extent that between my life and my knowledge, there is no disparity; what I know and what I am, there is no disparity.

Vyavasthithi means commitment to Gyana yoga.

Take Away:

The goal of life (Vedanta) will influence my way of life (Veda purva), and my way of life in turn will influence my goal of life also.

Abhayam: Self-confidence is important because spiritual life is an adventure. It is a greater adventure than reaching Everest, than going to Artic circle or Antartic circle.

Vedantic knowledge is one thing, which can never naturally happen. One has to work at it.

**With Best
Wishes,**

Ram Ramaswamy