

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 163 – Chapter 12 Bhakti Yoga Verses 17 to 20

In the second part of the 12th chapter, beginning of 13th verse, Lord Krishna talked about the highest bhakta who has gone through all the five levels of bhakti yoga. This bhakta will necessarily be jñāni. This Jñāni is sthira pragya. Jñāni's source of love is himself. He is efficient in all situations and takes appropriate actions in every situation. Generally, a samsari takes two extremes. The first extreme is when there is a problem, impulsively takes action and often unjust or inappropriate actions, because discriminative power is not used when making this action. The other extreme is whatever is the situation, he puts up with all the problems and allows other people to be exploited. Inaction and passivity is the other extreme. One is reaction and the other is inaction. Vedanta says both are wrong and what is required is appropriate action. Punishment should be given only after proper inquiry.

Verse 17

That devotee who neither rejoices nor grieves, neither desires nor hates, and gives up good and evil is dear to Me.

The one who is free from extreme emotional reactions to situations is dear to Krishna. The reactions to favorable and unfavorable situations should not be extreme. It is this discriminating power is what distinguishes humans from animals. Emotional upheaval clouds discriminating power. We should have enough discriminating power to know that our discriminating power is getting clouded and postpone any response. We should have mental balance to know that the mental balance is out of balance. We must be free from binding

raga dwesha and binding expectations. Have expectations but be prepared for their fulfillment as well as their non-fulfillment. You can contribute to your future, but you can't control your future.

From vedantic angle, both punyam and pavam are bondage. Since punyam is finite in nature, it is also bondage. Punyam is golden shackle and pavam is iron shackle. A jñāni does punya karma for jñāna nishta.

Verse 18

He is the same towards friend and foe, as well as honor and dishonor. He is the same in cold and heat as well as comfort and discomfort and is free from attachment.

The one who has the same attitude towards friend and foe is jñāni. jñāni does not develop raga or dwesha towards friend or foe. A Jñāni's goal always is to correct the other person and not to punish the other person. Compassion does not mean putting up with wrong actions. With compassion we can take appropriate steps. Honor and dishonor are not totally under our control. We have to be mentally prepared to treat honor and dishonor with equanimous.

Life nothing but a series of opposing events. If there is birth, there is death. If there is health, there is illness. We can only prepare to accept all opposing events. Until jñānam comes only option is bhakti towards ishta devata. We should strengthen our bhakti until we get jñānam. When a favorable situation comes, don't expect it to be permanent.

Verse 19

That devotee, who is the same towards censure and praise, who is a person of limited speech, who is content with anything, who is homeless, and who has firm knowledge of the Self is dear to Me.

Whatever you do, there will be somebody to criticize because criticism does not involve any expenditure. If there are people willing to advise you, they will tell you directly. The uniqueness of Jñāni's mind is easy to please. Self-knowledge gives him this strength and it is the most powerful knowledge.

Verse 20

Those devotees who keep Me as the primary goal and who faithfully pursue this righteous and immortal teaching as mentioned are very dear to Me.

How can I attain such a state of mind? One must go through the five stages of bhakti yoga:

1. Sakama Karama yoga.
2. Nishkama karma yoga.
3. Eka roopa bhakti.
4. Aneka roopa bhakti.
5. Nirguna eeswara jñānam.

Krishna says that this teaching is based on veda and not contrary to the revelation given in vedas.