Bhagwat Geeta, Class 168 – Chapter 13 Verses 8 to 12

In verses 2 to 7, Lord Krishna elaborates kṣetram and kṣetrajña. These topics are also discussed in Chapter 2 as consciousness and matter principles.

Verses 8 through 12

Humility, simplicity, non-violence, forbearance, uprightness, service to the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control, detachment from sense objects, absence or egoism, constantly seeing the defect of identification with son, wife, house, etc., always being Equanimeous in desirable and undesirable situations, unswerving devotion to Me with constant self-inquiry and not losing sight of the fruit of self-knowledge – all this is said to be gyanam. That which is opposed to this jñānam*.*

In verses 8 to 12, Lord Krishna deals with jñānam. In this context jñānam means group of mental virtues required to enjoy a fit mind for gaining spiritual knowledge. In the presence of these virtues mind will be jñāna yoga. An unfit mind will resist jñānam and it will receive the jñānam and even it receives the knowledge it will not be unassimilated. This can be counterproductive. So, one should focus more on the values required for moksha/ jñānam. These values are otherwise known as dharma. Dharma is the steppingstone for moksha purusärtha. Without going through dharma, a person can't hope to obtain jñānam or moksha.

In these verses, about twenty virtues are given by Krishna.

1. Amänitvam: Mänitvam is self-glory, looking upon oneself as a great person. Amänitvam is freedom from self-admiration or self-conceit or humility.

1. Self-admiration is a big obstacle for jñānam, because it is addictive, and we will need it all the time. Deprivation of admiration by society causes problems like any other addiction. While it is the duty of society to admire accomplishments, we ourself should not join that admiration.
1. Self-discriminative power is lost by self-glorification and excitement. Once the discriminatory power is lost, I lose sight of important facts:
    1. Whatever the accomplishment, there are enumerable other factors and people involved. My contribution is only one of the factors, but in excitement I take full credit for the accomplishment. Whatever the name and fame, most of the credit goes to other factors.
    1. Whatever the accomplishment, it is because of the talent I was born which is a gift from God; I forget god’s contribution. Self-conceit and bhakti cannot co-exist.
    1. However great I am, I can never claim myself to be the greatest one, because I live in a world where there are people, there were people and there will be people who are greater than me. Because I forget this fact, I can never admire another person who is greater than me. A self-conceited person can’t admire another person. When this self-conceit is replaced by anger and jealousy. Once self-conceit sets in the door of devotion is gone.

In our purna there are many stories illustrating amänitvam.

- Adhambithvam: Dhambithvam is physical expression of mänitvam. Adhmbithvam is not requiring admiration at physical level. Not seeking attention; simplicity; inconspicuous in a crowd.
- Ahimsa: Nonviolence; not hurting other beings. We have three weapons for hurting others:
    - Body – kayikam or action
    - Speech (animals don't have this weapon). Humans have this weapon which can be used wisely or abused.
    - Mental. Mentally cursing others, hurting others through thoughts.

In ashtanga yoga, the first vow to be followed by a spiritual seeker is ahimsa. The significance of ahimsa:

1. I do not want to do anything to others that I don't want other to do to me. This is our instinctive feeling, so this is also instinctive feeling for others. This is the universal law and anytime we violate universal law, we are violating dharma. When we violate dharma, nothing happens to dharma, but we hurt ourselves.
2. Whatever I contribute to the world now that alone I can withdraw later. If I contribute himsa, I only get himsa back. If I don't want to be injured by the world, then we should follow ahimsa.
3. The tendency to hurt others is impulsive and natural. When expectations are not fulfilled then I am hurt. Then the immediate reaction is to hurt that object which is the cause of my hurt. An injured person injures others and there is no gap between my injury and causing injury to others. If this natural reaction can stop only when my mind becomes sensitive, that when I hurt

someone else, the sensitive mind should feel the pain of others. For a sensitive person, hurting another person is like causing self-injury. Sensitized mind and empathy are required to follow ahimsa. A sensitive mind is required to understand sensitive topics of vedanta. Crime itself becomes punishment for a sensitive mind.

4. Shanti: One meaning of shanti is mental resistance or immunity so mind is not disturbed when expectations are not fulfilled. Shanti is developing that mental immunity so that I am not vulnerable to external fluctuations.