

Bagawat Geeta, Class 15

Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

Swamiji starts off by refreshing our memory of last week's talks.

Arjuna expresses his helplessness and surrenders to Sri Krishna in grief and requests him to teach. He raises the question if it is correct to fight one's guru and kin.

Sri Krishna takes three approaches in answering Arjuna. The philosophical, the Ethical and the Worldly approach in teaching Arjuna.

In the philosophical approach he informs Arjuna that he is none other than the eternal Atma as are the others such as Bhishma and Drona. Everything is Atma. Atma is Chaitanya Swarupam. It is neither a karta nor a bhoktha. There is no one killing or being killed. When you are a pot, you think of the origin as a pot and destruction also of a pot.

However, when you shift your vision you realize it is the clay in the pot at all times. During the Pot's birth, life and death, the clay remains as is. It was clay at beginning and it continues to remain clay. So from the Pot's vision there is birth and death. From the Clay's vision there is no birth or death. In the ocean example, from standpoint of wave-vision, there is the birth of a wave and there is a death; but from the standpoint of water-vision, nothing is born and nothing is gone. Change the mind to understand that Atma alone is there. There is no birth or death. There is no punyam or papam. So, Arjuna, you do your duty. This is the philosophical approach. To understand this, one has to have a sharp intellect. This is the topic (philosophical) discussed from Shloka #12-25.

If one does not understand or grasp the philosophical approach, for some reason, then Sri Krishna points out a Dharmic approach or ethical approach, as well. For sake of

Dharma, a Kshatriya must be ready to fight and give up life, if all other doors are closed. Therefore Arjuna you should fight. So from philosophical angle, you must fight and from an ethical angle also you should fight.

Offering yet another approach Sri Krishna says, Arjuna, you may not believe in ethics itself. You may not believe in Dharma or Adharma. But as long as you are in society, aren't you conscious of your self-esteem, your social status, and how the other people think of you?

You are bothered about your name and fame and from that angle also, or Laukika Dṛṣṭi, you have to fight this war. Otherwise, you will get a very bad name. You will lose your honor.

So, these are the three angles taken by Sri Krishna. We will first deal with the philosophical angle, from 12 to 25.

Sri Krishna defines Atma as Chaitanyam and it is different from the body and it pervades the body. It is not a product, part or property of the body. It is a separate entity. Providing the hand analogy, when you are seeing the hand, you are seeing the two things, one is the hand, and another thing is the light. Light is on the hand, but it is not a property, part or a product of the hand. Atma is the conscious principle that makes the body sentient and alive. It is not bound by limitations of body. Again, giving example of light, it is not bound by the hand. Light pervades everywhere. Light continues even if hand is removed. However, now, when the hand is removed this light is not visible anymore. To see the light you need a hand or a manifesting medium. Only when hand is placed, you see the light. Thus Atma becomes Vyaktham. After death Atma becomes Avyaktham.

This first property property of Atma is called Nithyaha or it is eternal. It exists as a Vyaktha (visible) or Avyaktha (invisible).

The second property of Atma is Akartha and Abhoktha.

It does not perform any action. When the hand moves, it does so, because it is a limited entity, while light is all pervading. Motion is possible only for limited bodies such as hand, the earth etc. Can space move? Space travel is not space traveling but it is traveling in space. Space cannot travel, as it is all pervading.

Any action requires motion. Any motion is a limitation. Even thinking requires thought motion. Atma being limitless, it cannot perform any action, hence it is called an Akartha. So, it is also Abhoktha or free from the results of action.

Kartha alone reaps karmaphalam. The eater alone gets benefit from hunger Nivriti. Kartha Eva Bhoktha Bhavathi. Whatever are experiences in life is due to our karma phalam. Other people can only serve as a medium for our experiences. Any problem created anywhere in the world is experienced only because of you. Similarly, any struggle, any problem created by anyone in the world, do not take it as their problem, it is my karma phalam, coming through those people. Because of what law does this occur? The law that states that Karta eva bhokta bhavathi. If atma is akarta, atma is abhokta. This is the second property of Atma. Atma is Nithya. Atma is akarta and abhokta.

Atma is Nirvikaraha. This is a third property of Atma. Whatever changes happens to hand, the light is not affected. Hand may get dirty, may get wounded but light is not affected. Body goes through modifications such as Childhood, Boyhood, Youth and Old age. However, Atma does not have these experiences.

The Atma cannot be seen. The Atma is the seer, the subject, not the object. Eyes cannot see itself. Thus, Atma is Aprameya, another definition of Atma. Seer cannot be seen. Experiencer cannot be experienced. Aprameya is the fourth

definition of Atma.

Shloka # 12:

“Never at any time, have I been not; neither you nor these rulers of men. And never shall we all cease to be.”

In this shloka everything is in double negatives. Thus: You cannot say Atma was absent in the past. You cannot say Atma is absent in present. You cannot say Atma will not be there in future.

Swamiji noted that the Shloka does not address the present as Sri Krishna and Arjuna were already in the present.

Shloka # 13:

“Just as the embodied Self has, in the body, childhood, youth, and old age, so does it win another body. An intelligent man is not bewildered by it.”

What is birth and death? If I am eternal, then birth and death are only changing the medium of interaction, the body. The body has to change, as it will be worn out. We are the medium and it goes through changes. In the body there are four stages of experience. Balyam, Kaumaram, Youwanam, and Jara (old age). While body goes through changes, my identity does not change. The “I” remains the same. As per biology, all our body cells change very few years. Our cells are continuously changing, we are just not aware of it. “I” still remain amidst all changes. If you extend this, you can change the useless body with another body. It is like demolishing an old building and building a new one. However, in all this, the space in the building does not change. It is forever.

Dhiraha: does not mean courageous. It means discriminating person. One who accepts body as a temporary medium? One who is not deluded? Therefore, Arjuna, in this war too, Bhishma shariram will go, however, Bhishma, the ātma will never go.

Similarly with Droṇa shariram and Karna shariram. So why are you grieving?

Shloka # 14:

“O son of Kunti, contacts of senses with their objects cause cold and heat, pleasure and pain. These come and go-they are fleeting. O Bharatha Prince, endure them.”

Just as you understand and accept the nature of Atma, so also, become aware of the nature of Anatma and accept it. The nature of a thing cannot be changed. Giving an example, Swamiji says: One man did not like Onion. He wanted to change the smell of onion. He put the onion in Camphor powder, musk, and saffron and in scented water. After all

that it still smelled like an onion. So also, nature of a thing cannot be changed. It is a waste of time trying to change nature. Rather one should change our attitude towards nature, that nature cannot be changed. This change in attitude is to “accept” the nature of the body. Most of our problems are due to not accepting the nature of things. While Nature cannot be changed our attitude towards Nature can be changed. And in what way can we change the attitude? We can change our attitude to one of “acceptance”. I accept the nature of the body. This is the upāsana.

So, when summer comes, we feel hot. Rather than accepting the glory of the sun, we complain about the heat. So, we should change our attitude towards the body, nature etc. Until I learn to accept nature, problems will be there. In fact, resistance leads to sorrow. Learn to live with the situation, rather than running away. This will increase your capacity to accept heat, cold, pain and pleasure. Life is a series of opposite experiences. Thus, if Manam (pride) comes, apamanam (insult) will come. If samyogaḥ takes place, there will be viyogaḥ. If there is growth, there will be decay. If there is gain, there will be loss. Life is a series of opposite experiences. This is the nature of Anatma. They are

subject to arrival and departure. When they come, be mentally prepared to welcome them, when they depart, be mentally prepared to send them off. Thus, Atma is Anithya, impermanent. May you develop the endurance, both physical and mental, to bear this.

Shloka # 15:

“O hero, The man whom these do not agitate, who is the same in pain and pleasure, and who is wise, becomes fit indeed for immortality.”

The faculty of endurance is called Titiksha. Titiksha is the quality where one does not get irritated immediately. When our endurance is less, we become irritated quickly. Not to react immediately, not to get irritated immediately, not to punish the other person immediately; because when the endurance is less, we get irritated very quickly.

Lack of endurance (patience)>causes Irritation>causes Anger>causes Himsa.

The lack of endurance is a modern problem.

Swamiji says the quality known as Titiksha is essential for Atmagyanam.

In olden times Gurus used to ask Shishyas to perform mundane and boring tasks such as tending the cows and cutting the firewood. If the student displayed patience, he was allowed to stay and learn. Therefore Sri Krishna says samdukhasukham, One who is calm and tranquil, he alone is fit for this knowledge.

Suggested take away from this class:

1. Learn to practice Titiksha.
2. While body goes through changes, my identity does not change. The “I” remains the same. Try to be aware consciously of this never changing “I” within you.

With my good wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy