

Baghawat Geeta Class 75, Chapter 5, Verses 17 to 19

Greetings All,

Shloka # 17:

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With intellect set on It as the Self, perceiving It as the Self, devoted to It, It being the supreme abode, the sages, their sins routed by knowledge, proceed to that status whence there is no return.

Continuing his teaching of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, from the 13th shloka onwards, Lord Krishna has been discussing Gyana yoga, which is the central theme of this chapter.

It is this Gyana yoga that leads to inner detachment, which alone is real renunciation. External renunciation does not lead to complete renunciation as we still depend on material things. We still need a roof over our head we need food etc. We cannot renounce these things. External renunciation is possible, however, it will always be partial. Internal renunciation can, however, be total.

And what is that **internal renunciation**; it is **discovery of our higher nature, the Atma** and that the **Atma is not associated with anything in the creation**. It is similar to space that accommodates everything but space is not connected to anything. If space is connected to any object, when the object travels the space also will travel.

This nature of space by which it is close to everything but not connected to anything is called Asanga svabhava. In the movie screen while a fire is projected, it does not burn the

screen. Similarly water also does not wet the screen. The screen is asanga. Atma is called asanga swaroopa. I am not related to anything. This understanding of relation-less-ness is Sanyasa. Such a person loves everyone but is not attached to anyone. He loves every person but is not hooked to any person. He lives in every place but he is not rooted to any place, which is born out of inner renunciation and this inner renunciation is only possible through Gyanam which is called here vidvat sanyasaha. For this reason alone, this chapter is named Sanyasa Yoga or yoga of renunciation.

In last class, in shloka # 17, we saw Sri Krishna describing the four stages of knowledge as follows:

1. First, **value the discovery of the higher self** or value discovery of wisdom. This requires Parayana-tvam or a deep yearning from the heart and soul for such wisdom. It is like being submerged in water and desiring to breathe. This is called Tat Parayanam.
2. Then the next stage is **discovering the higher self or Atma and knowing that it is the "consciousness" in the body**
3. Then the next stage is **learning to identify with the higher self and gradually dis-identify from the lower self**. Here identification with Atma means knowing " I am the Atma and that I have an incidental body which may be taken away at any time without notice. I am the eternal consciousness that Lord will not take away." Here one owns and claims, " I am Atma".
4. And then the fourth and **final stage is the identification with the higher self becomes natural**. Owning up to Atma becomes natural. It is like the actor who plays many roles but knows his true Self. Just as fatherhood is a role, mother, wife is all roles. All these roles are from the physical body's point of view. They are merely roles. This constant awareness of true Self is called Nishta. **Any knowledge is spontaneous if**

it is available during a crisis. This effortless accessibility is called Aham Gyana Nishta. This is Jivan mukti. Upon death that person attains Videha mukti.

Shloka # 18:

ब्रह्मसूत्रसंनिधौ ब्रह्मसूत्रं ब्रह्मसूत्रं
ब्रह्मसूत्रं ब्रह्मसूत्रं ब्रह्मसूत्रं ब्रह्मसूत्रं5.18

The sages perceive the same truth in the Brahmana, rich in knowledge and culture, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eating outcaste.

In the next two shlokas Sri Krishna is talking about benefits from this knowledge.

The transformation that occurs in a Gyani is in the manner in which he looks at people and things. Our problem is not due to people or the world. Gyani also lives in the same world. For a Gyani, the whole world is a relaxation ground, a nandanavanam, and all trees are kamadhenu and all places are Varanasi and all rivers, including coovam is ganga. The world remaining the same, the people remaining the same, if the

Gyani can enjoy ananda, it means the problem is not with the world but the problem is in the way that we see the world or our perspective of it. World being same Gyani still enjoys it, while others don't. **Thus, Vedanta does not transform the world. It transforms my view of the world.**

Citing an example, the world is like a mirror, I see only myself in the mirror. So, I see the world as I see myself. If I am bothered about how I look and dress, I will look to see how other people are dressing? If I am physical oriented I try to see beauty in others. If I am the emotional personality oriented; I will see the emotional

personality of people. If I am an intellectual, again I will look for intellectuality in others. Even the God I visualize,

I see him based on my obsession with beauty, emotion and intellectual orientation. If I am Saguna Jiva, then I see God as Saguna Ishwara. If I see him as nirguna chaitanyam, **Gyani looks upon himself, as "I am Atma". He sees everyone as Atma Chaitanyam. All of us are Atma's with incidental bodies. This is Sarvatra Samdarshanam. This samdarshanam is seen through the eyes of wisdom (divya chakshu) and not the physical eye.** What about physical organs? He will see differences as superficial differences. Samatvam will be more pronounced than differences.

This change of perspective is like a hundred rupee note in the hands of a child versus in your hand. For the child, all the papers are the same or Sama darshanam; a five hundred-rupee note also is a piece of paper, it may tear it and throw or it will try to eat. You, however, see something different in that piece of paper. **Therefore, a Gyani is Samadrishti while Agyani is Bhede Drishti.**

The word Panditaha means Atma Gyani. Sri Krishna uses this word in second chapter as well. The definition of panditaha given in this verse is panditaha sama samadarshinaha. And therefore Sri Krishna says, gyani looks upon himself as atma. He looks at the body as a temporary dress. Gyani looks at everyone as atma as well; every one is chaitanyam; and just as I am the atma with an incidental body; similarly, all of you are atma with an incidental body; Krishna says there is no difference at all; sarvatra sama darshanam. He is not seeing through the physical eyes. He sees through eyes of wisdom or Gyana Chakshu. The physical eye still sees the differences. This eye if it sees samatvam, one has to go hospital; if gyana eye sees samatvam, you are ready for moksha. In Pandithaha Sama Samadarshinaha the word sama means sama atma darshinaha. And where do they see the samatvam; he gives a big list of widely different things in the world from a Brahmana to a dog eater.

A brahmana is a cultured person in whom the satva guna is

pradhana. After Sravnam, Mananam and Nidhidhysanam one becomes a brahman. He is rich in Gyanam. Money can only buy finite things while knowledge can purchase the infinite moksha.

So here a brahmana is one who is endowed with the character of vidya-vinaya-sampanna meaning Gyanam.

Brahmana is supposed to practice poverty voluntarily. He is supposed to lead a simple life. Gyana Dhanam compensates material poverty. He is an embodiment of humility (vinayaha). Water flows from high to low. When I bend I accept others as higher. Without humility wisdom cannot come.

Then Sri Krishna talks of the Cow, respected as a satvic animal. All devas are in the body of the cow. That is the reason pradakshina of a cow is performed. Sri Krishna enumerates them all to show they are all seen as one.

Hastathi: Elephant is worshipped as Vinayaka.

Shuni is dog. It is considered a lowly animal. Dogs are not supposed to be kept in a house. Today, of course people adore dogs.

Shvapaka: A dog eater. In our culture meat eating is not accepted as it involves himsa. This is especially true if you are a spiritual seeker. Meat eating promotes Tamo Guna. A dog eater is considered the worst among meat eaters.

So from Brahman to dog-eater all are seen as one by the Gyani. While they are widely different, they are so only in Sthula sharira and sukshma shariras. **Even a person's character belongs to the sukshma shariram. Thus, Satva, Rajo and Tamo gunas belong to the body alone. Atma itself is nirgunaha. Gyani's vision is only of one Atma.**

Samdarshnam is only in the back of the mind. During transactions, however, differences have to be accommodated. There he has to follow dharma or Vyavahara.

Shankaracharya says, let advaitam be in background, practice dvaitam in Vyavahara. Samdarshanam is only in subconscious mind. While there are many ornaments, gold is the basis in all of them.

Shloka # 19:

एतदत्रैव जन्मममृतं विजितं तस्मै ह्येवमभिधीयते
तस्मै ह्येवमभिधीयते तस्मै ह्येवमभिधीयते 5.19

Even here is birth vanquished by him whose mind abides in equality. Flawless indeed is Brahman, the same; hence they abide in Brahman.

Another important shloka, looked at, from a particular angle. Does liberation occur before death or after death is a question discussed among philosophers. Some say, only after death does one get liberation when one goes to Shivaloka.

In advaita, liberation is possible, here and now. In this shloka Sri Krishna says so as well. Liberation is possible for a person of Samadrishti or a person who has mastered samsara. Samsara does not affect him. His vision has changed. The wave was conscious of itself thinking, “ I am born out of ocean. I am older. I will disintegrate and merge into the ocean. I am a mortal wave subject to winds (prarabhdha karmas).”

But imagine that very wave has shifted it's vision and instead of mistaking itself to be a wave, it claims that I am water with an incidental form; the wind has not created me; I have been there all the time; wind has only given a shape to me; and that shape is incidental; and the shape is bound to go. So whether the shape is there or not, whether form is there or not; I am the eternal water; and even when the Sun evaporates me; I the water will continue in the form of steam or

humidity; and even when I am pouring down; I continue as a rain, and when it pours into streams, I am called rivers; my names are different; but I am the eternal water; then that

wave is an enlightened wave.

Similarly, because of my shift in attention, end of transactions is not my end. I still survive. Fear of mortality goes away.

Even for one moment if the wave forgets it is water, it becomes mortal again. Samadarshanam must be established in mind even as worldly transactions continue.

The same inherent thing is chaitanyam. Hence the reason we say “ I am” when we introduce ourselves. “I” is the consciousness and “am” is existence. This is common to all of us.

“I am” is Atma alone. This consciousness is in every being. Water is in all waves. Body is located but consciousness is in all beings. What is nature of Brahman? It is ever pure, beautiful and secure. Why do you claim the ever-impure body? Claim the ever-pure Brahman.

Take Away:

1. that internal renunciation; it is discovery of our higher nature, the Atma and that the Atma is not associated with anything in the creation.
2. Vedanta does not transform the world. It transforms my view of the world.
3. Gyani looks upon himself, as “I am Atma”. He sees everyone as Atma Chaitanyam. All of us are Atma’s with incidental bodies. This is Sarvatra Samdarshanam. This samdarshanam is seen through the eyes of wisdom (divya chakshu) and not the physical eye.
4. Thus, Satva, Rajo and Tamo gunas belong to the body alone. Atma itself is nirgunaha.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy

