

Bhagawat Geeta, Class 106: Chapter 7, Verses 16 to 19

Shloka # 16:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ७.१६ ॥

Arjuna! Men of righteous acts are four fold. They resort to Me, O best of Bharatas! They are afflicted,

The knowledge seeker, wealth seeker and the knower.

Continuing his teaching of the Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, after dealing with Ishwaraswarupam, consisting of Para Parkriti (PP) and Apara Prakriti (AP), Sri Krishna then pointed out about our human problem in shloka # 13. The cause of the human problem is seeking security from the insecure objects of the world; seeking permanence from the impermanent objects of the world; seeking fulfillment

from the finite objects of the world; seeking happiness from the sorrowful or sorrow-giving objects of the world; this misplaced seeking is the cause of misery. Our expectations are the wrong ones hence they are not fulfilled, leading to sorrow and depression. Apara Parkriti cannot give us permanent security; Para Parkriti alone can provide us with this.

Now from shlokas # 14 through # 19, Sri Krishna is discussing solutions or Samsara Nivriti karanam; and Ishwara Sharanagathi or Ishwara Bhakti is presented as the solution.

Now what is Bhakti? This topic is now elaborated upon. Various stages of Bhakti are also discussed. Many people don't turn to Bhakti, as they do not have the punyam from past births. A few do obtain the punyam of past births and turn to God. Many of them do so without knowing the true nature of God. For such

people scriptures temporarily present various forms of God for our worship; just as in Mathematics until we find an answer to a problem, we use X. X only represents the unknown solution and using it you start to find out what X is. Similarly, we have got personal Gods or formed Gods or Ishta devata, which are like the unknown X of mathematics. Until I know what exactly is the unknown God, I hold on to that Ishvara.

Shloka # 16 discussed in last class the four types of bhaktas who surrender to God. They are:

Artaha Bhakta: Bhaktas who think of God, only at times of crisis. Such a bhakti requires a problem to arise for one to worship God and is known as dukha nivrittyartham bhakti. Most people start their bhakti from this stage.

Because of this bhakti, now, there is the idea that religion is only for weak people. In times of problems one does look to god for help. Many people, however, consider religion is only for weaker people. This misconception exists. Generally we go to the Lord when we have a crisis. If we are not confident enough of solving it we go to some temple or some Swami for help.

1. Artha-arthi Bhakta: He uses god for fulfilling his worldly ends.
2. Jignasu Bhakta: He considers God himself as his end.
3. Gyani Bhakta: For him God is "I" myself. Here the seeker is one with sought. Sri Krishna has presented these four types of Bhaktas. They can also be considered as four stages of Bhakti in a person.

I start as artha or artharthi bhakta and once I use it for my material gains, I mature. I understand the material world cannot give me security. I continue to be a bhakti; however, I now become a nishkama bhakta instead of remaining a sakama bhakta. The jignasu is one such bhakta. For him, he knows god alone can give him security. God can be accomplished only in

terms of

Gyanam; accomplishing God is not a physical event; it is not a travel in time; accomplishment of God is in terms of knowledge; because, if God is all pervading and I don't have to travel to reach him; why should I travel to reach an omniscient god? I have to discover God here and now. Ishwara prapthi is same as Ishwara gyana parpthi. I want knowledge of God. Desirer of this knowledge is jignasu.

Ishwara Gyanam is only possible in a purified mind. So, I want a pure mind. Therefore Jignasu bhakta uses religion for purity of mind; and this conversion is conversion of a religious person into a spiritually religious person.

There are two types of religious people:

1. Materialistic religious person, one who uses religion for material gains.
2. Jignasu: One who uses religion for purifying the mind. He uses religion for purity of mind, purity of knowledge and this purity are meant for Gyanam, which is meant for attainment of God; attainment of God is meant for getting purnatvam and security. The jignasu bhakta becomes a Gyana Yogi, later on.

And, therefore, Jignasu bhaktha is a karma yogi; a karma yogi means a spiritually religious person; whereas a karmi is a materially religious person.

Jignasu Bhakta's travel is a long one. He has to go through Karma Yoga, then Gyana Yoga and then become a Gyana Bhakta. He has discovered the Lord. That lord is never away from Me. In him, dvaita bhakti is converted to advaita bhakti.

There are four levels of bhakti. So don't feel bad about being an artha bhakta. There is nothing wrong in praying for cure of a disease or any other problem. God says, gradually move from artha bhakti to the next stage. Gradually move from Artha to

arthartha or jignasu or gyani. Scriptures are generous; they say one can do this over many lives.

Shloka # 17:

सर्वेषु ज्ञानिनां भक्त्याऽपि सर्वेषु भक्त्याऽपि
सर्वेषु भक्त्याऽपि सर्वेषु भक्त्याऽपि ७.१७

Of them all, the knower, ever integrated and exclusively devoted, excels; for I am exceedingly dear to the knower and he is dear to Me.

Sri Krishna talked about four types or levels of bhakti. Human mind likes to compare and asks who is the greatest bhakta of the four. Among the four, the Gyani bhakta is considered the greatest one. This shloka also removes the misconception that one can be in bhakti Yoga without coming to Gyana Yoga.

Sri Krishna says a bhakti yogi too cannot escape Gyanam. Initially he can stay in karma yoga but later on he has to come to Gyanam. Here it does not mean coming to meditation. He has to come to a systematic study of scriptures under a qualified acharya. Scriptures talk of saguna and nirguna Ishwara.

Bhagawatham discussed both saguna and nirguna god; but it distilled out the nirguna portion out. It removes another misconception that a Gyani has no bhakti. Sri Krishna says a nirguna Gyani is the greatest bhakta of all.

This Gyani is ever steadfast in Me. **In Dvaita bhakti, god arrives and departs. In advaita, "I" am never away from god.** Ekabhakta is advaita bhakta.

Talking about love there is a discussion in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad on this topic. **The question is whom does a human being love most? The Upanishad says, no one loves anyone; everyone loves one's self, alone. Everyone is interested in one's own happiness only.** As long as those external factors

are conducive we love that person or thing; once they are not conducive, we drop them like a hot potato.

This is the truth. One is interested only in his own selfish happiness. Love of anyone else is conditional and only if it is favorable to him.

Scriptures say even love of god, where god is an object other than you, even this love is conditional. Self-love is the highest love. Object love is conditional and hence lower. If love of God is highest, it is possible under only one condition; then god should not be different from me. Only in this case can God's love be the highest. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says, for a Gyani, God and self are one, hence it is highest love of all.

Shloka # 18:

सर्वेषां गतिं प्राप्नुयान्मत्तन्मया ॥
सर्वेषां च मया तन्मया तन्मया ॥ 7.18 ॥

All these (four) are noble; but the knower, I deem to be My very Self; for with an integrated self, he has resorted to Me alone, the goal without parallel.

When Sri Krishna mentions this, other devotees may feel bad. But God says, I love all devotees (bhaktas). The difference is that Gyani is identical with Me. In others, love of god is conditional.

This shloka is a mahavakya. It says Gyani is one with a committed mind, meaning his goal is liberation. He has come to the highest goal of life, Me.

In shloka the word Gatihi means goal. Other bhaktas have different goals. Citing an example: A couple without children pray to a rishi for a child. The Rishi blesses them. After some time the child is born, but later he dies. They go weeping to the rishi. Then the rishi gives them a boon to be

is the formless Sri Krishna. He is entire creation. Such a gyani mahatma is a very rare being. Arjuna, May you try to become a gyani bhakta.

Take away:

Upanishad says, no one loves anyone; everyone loves one's self, alone. Everyone is interested in one's own happiness, alone.

Love of anyone else is conditional and only if it is favorable to him.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy