

Bagawad Gita, Class 164:

Chapter 12 Summary

Continuing

his teaching Swamiji said, today I will give you a summary of the chapter 12.

It is culmination of mid-section of the Gita, the madhyama shatakam. First six chapters were called prathama shatakam, 7-12 as Madhyama shatakam and 13-18 as charama shatakam.

In

Chapters 7-11, Sri Krishna talked about Ishwara swarupam. Chapters 1-6, he

discussed Jiva Swarupam. Ishwara swarupam culminates in Bhakti, which is love

and devotion to Ishwara. Love is possible only towards someone you know. You

can never have a positive or negative emotion towards an unknown person. When

you meet an unknown person; your attitude is a neutral; only when you move with

the person and come to know more and more about that person you develop either

liking towards the person or dislike.

This

is process of falling in love. The more the contact is, more one comes to know

and this develops an attitude of love. This happens with God as well. I can't

love an unknown God. One cannot command one to love. I have to give knowledge

and that can create a healthy attitude. Citing example of love for country,

If I want you to develop love towards the country; I have to talk about the glory of the country. You may ask is there any glory at all; that is a different thing; I can never hold an attitude. An attitude is not command-based; an attitude is not will based; an attitude is generated based on your understanding; and Sri Krishna knows this principle. In five chapters Sri Krishna devoted time to giving you the knowledge of God; and now that we know what that God will be; the consequence of that will be a healthy attitude towards the Lord; and that attitude is called bhakthi.

Therefore

Ch.12 is natural culmination of previous five chapters. Although a short chapter of 20 shlokas it is a very important chapter. In this chapter, the entire Vedic teaching has been encapsulated; that is Veda Purva and Veda anta; or it is Veda Sara. Therefore at end of chapter Sri Krishna says it is Veda Sara or Dharmayam.

This

chapter has two topics: 1) Bhakti Yoga and 2) Bhakti Yoga Phalam.

But

before entering the two topics Sri Krishna answers a question posed by Arjuna.

In previous chapter, Ch. 11, Sri Krishna talked about Saguna Ishwara or Vishwa

Rupa Ishwara. Here the world is full of Gunas and hence Saguna. Arjuna had heard of Nirguna Ishwara, so he has a question: between Saguna and Nirguna

Ishwara, which bhakti is superior? Generally we are attracted to Saguna as we

can't experience or conceive of Nirguna Ishwara. So question

is, which dhyanam
is better?

Sri

Krishna gives a peculiar answer. Implication of the answer is not to ask irrelevant questions. He implies that there is no choice. Every seeker requires Saguna bhakti and eventually nirguna Ishwara bhakti as well. Saguna bhakti is the stepping-stone to nirguna dhyanam. Without Nirguna Dhyanam, Saguna dhyanam is incomplete.

One

can postpone nirguna dhyanam but one has to come to nirguna, because nirguna Ishwara is the ultimate reality, which is based on the well-known Keno Upanishad saying: Saguna Ishwara that you meditate upon is never the ultimate reality. You should remember the ultimate reality is a saguna object of meditation. And therefore Krishna's answer is that everybody has to go through both saguna and nirguna bhakti.

Sri

Krishna then he enters bhakti yoga sadhana and its phalam.

Bhakti

yoga is not a particular sadhana but a range of sadhanas and it consist of several levels. In this chapter it is presented as having five stages.

Each

stage is important before going to next one.

First
stage:

Sakama

karma phala karma yoga: Anyone can start in this path. Any karma can be performed to fulfill one's desires. We bring a lot of desires, from our previous lives; some are unfulfilled ones. So let initial life be Yoga Kshema Pradhana. Once I obtain my desire I now need to maintain it. How to convert to Karma yoga? Learn to accept consequences of actions as God's ashirvadam.

Second
stage:

As

a person matures, he realizes that he needs to transfer some of his yoga kshema to Lord.

It

is an important skill that we have to develop; we have to learn to transfer a part of our yoga kshema concern to the Lord. Only then, we will have time, that too quality time and relaxed mind for another set of activity which is meant for chitta shuddhi.

Therefore

the second stage of karma yoga is involvement in those activities, which are meant for chitta shuddhi. **These we call chitta shuddhi pradhana karma, or nishkama karma pradhana karma yoga.** So we do have time to pray to the Lord for the child's examination as well as for giving me chitta

shuddhi.

So in this, I do not ask for yoga; I do not ask for kshema; O Lord whatever you give; I would learn to live with that; And whatever stays with me, I will learn to live with it. It is a very difficult stage; but we have to come to that.

Third
stage:

Ishta

Devata Upasana. In first stage of bhakti, I could not even sit down in

meditation. But here, in third stage, forgetting samsara and its activities one

prays to God. Here mind turns inwards and it is called Abhyasa Yogaha. Ishta

Devata can be any god in any form.

Fourth
Stage:

And once a person has gone through this stage; then he is ready for the fourth stage; I said before in the ishta devatha upasanam; there are advantages; but there are limitations as well and problem is that you may think that there are so many Gods and you may begin to compare; is Shiva greater or Vishnu; idea of division etc. arises; and also the Lord or the deity that I visualize is bound by time and space; that is also another limitation and therefore to break these limitations; I have to learn to look at the Ishta devatha as the very Vishva rupa Ishvara. Visha Rupa Dhyanam gives us chitta shudhi.

Fifth
stage:

After

four stages one becomes sadhana chatusthatya sampan; for it's meaning, I

suggest you refer to tatva bodha. It means one has the required mental preparedness for self-knowledge. This is Gyana Yoga, the final stage of bhakti yoga. Shankaracharya says final level of bhakti is self-enquiry.

It consists of Sravanam, mananam and nidhidhyasanam, for a length of time, on Vedantic scriptures, under a qualified Guru.

So sravanam is the consistent and systematic study of vedantic scriptures; not puranas.

Vedantic scriptures are one's which deal with nirguna Ishvaraha. The first four stages you could manage with saguna Ishvara; in the fifth level you have to come to nirguna Ishvara, which is discussed only in the Vedanta. Therefore, consistent and systematic study of Vedantic scriptures for a length of time, under the guidance of a competent acharya are required.

Sri Krishna himself has said so in the 4th chapter,

Arjuna you have to necessarily go to a guru, and open yourselves and ask for this teaching and consistently follow the sravanam. But what about those people who never had a guru?

Here we are talking about the general rules; but for every general rule there are exceptions, because there are spiritual geniuses. In the case of spiritual genius, a guru is not required; therefore in their case, they gain knowledge in an exceptional way; just as there was Ramanujan, a mathematic genius; he could master mathematics without the help of a

teacher.

When we are talking about general rule; never quote an exception; and every one requires a guru;

Therefore
sravanam from guru is
required.

Then comes the mananam; which is the removal of all the doubts; until my intellect is convinced that the nirguna ishvara is not different from me; the real me; aham brahmasmi. Our intellect will not easily accept it; until we accept, we have to find out what is the intellectual obstacle for accepting this; and whatever be the obstacle in the form of doubt, we have to remove it. It is a long process, we have to go through; which is called mananam; and once a person has gone through sravanam and mananam, he has to go through nidhidhyasanam; by which we mean the assimilation of this teaching; by which we mean repeatedly reminding my higher nature to myself. **Normally, the nature I now know is the lower nature; that I am so and so; born on such and such a date and time; with following qualification; so many years old; whatever your bio-data I give now; they all belong to the incidental ahamkara. I have to remind myself of my higher atma nature; this self-reminder is called Nidhidhyasanam.**

Thus
by following sravanam;
mananam and nidhidhyasanam;
I assimilate this teaching. And once the teaching is assimilated; this intellectual knowledge will bring about an emotional transformation. Because most of our problems are at emotional level; thus we have raga; dvesha; kama; krodha and bhayam; all these are emotional problems.

Samsara is experienced at emotional levels; and therefore this knowledge has to transform my emotional personality. Until then, I continue nidhidhyasanam. And these three sadhanas put together sravanam manana nidhidhyasana is called the fifth level of Gyana yoga.

Now the first four stages belong to Veda Purva.

The fifth stage belongs to Veda anta. Now, these five stages are not clear cut. All sadhanas may be followed with one predominating at a given time.

Shlokas
13-19: Bhakti Yoga Phalam:

When one goes through all five stages of bhakti yoga, one gets the Atma Gyanam that Aham Brahma asmi and Aham Purnaha asmi. Any knowledge removes ignorance. Thus physics knowledge removes physics ignorance. Self-knowledge removes self-ignorance. Gaining of knowledge is experienced at intellectual level while emotional benefits are a corollary. How does removal of ignorance give emotional benefits? The connection is not direct.

Vedanta points out that, purnatavam is our real nature. But, unfortunately, we don't know

this fact, as we are born with ignorance. As we learn more, ignorance goes away. This is true for self-ignorance, as well. When I don't know I am purnaha, I will mistake myself as Apurnaha. Agyanam leads to erroneous conclusion that I am an incomplete person at the intellectual level.

When I feel I am incomplete, I have desire to become complete. So I struggle to become complete; thus, as a child, I think getting that balloon will complete me. As an adult, I feel, a wife will complete me and so on. Therefore, I go on thinking this will complete me; this will complete me; this will complete me; and the whole life is spent searching for something, which will make my life complete.

This searching is called Kama. This causes emotional problems; this then shifts problem from intellect to emotion. This causes Krodha, when the desire is unfulfilled; and if it does get fulfilled, it then leads to Lobha, more desire, which again leads to Kama. Thus we are trapped in kama-krodha, moha-mada, matsarya cycle.

In fact all your emotional problems begin with this kama. And this kama comes up because of the erroneous conclusion that I am apurna.

Kama rises due to erroneous feeling that I am incomplete at the intellectual level but it manifests itself at emotional level.

Therefore

the root of the problem is at intellectual level; **though the problem is emotional; but the root is intellectual; and therefore you have to study the scriptures and solve the problem at**

intellectual level; then it will gradually transform your emotional

personality; since I am purnah; I know; I am

full and complete; whether things are around or not.

Expectations

are not there; frustrations are not there; complaints are not there; and therefore

all the benefits mentioned in this portion are the emotional benefits; but the

cause is at the intellectual knowledge. And therefore Sri Krishna enumerates them

from shloka No.13 to 19. I am not going to each sloka; but will

present in a nutshell;

All

our transactions are from three different levels.

I, as a karta in the world; as the doer of varieties of action; that is one role I play; and the second role I play is **as a bhokta**; receiving varieties of experiences; and the third is **I, as a pramatha**; how I look at the world; my perspective as an observer; And Sri Krishna says at all these three levels; there will be total transformation.

As

a karta; the

transformation is that my actions are no more born out of a sense of

incompleteness; It is not because I am apurna; I am doing the action with knowledge

I am purna; Therefore

all my actions are not meant for fulfillment; but they are done with fulfillment;
and therefore, there is no more any motive; karma phalam if it comes; aham purna; desired karma phalam if it does not come; aham purna; Therefore there is a very great relief; there is no concern; there is no tension. So, therefore, I act from purnatvam; not from apurnatvam; **this is first transformation.**

And
when I am full and complete; a mind, which has fullness, will always express only love. Fullness expresses in the form of love and compassion. Therefore all the actions are born out of love and compassion for others. This is **the second transformation.**

And
the **third transformation is since the action come from love, compassion without expectation and concern; the quality of the actions are excellent; because the mind is undisturbed; the performance is always better; And therefore every action is appropriate and sound action;**

Thus, as a karta; his motive is not fulfillment; it comes with fulfillment; love, compassion.

Similarly
as a bhokta
Sri Krishna
says: Since he operates from strength that aham purna asmi, he is not vulnerable to disturbances like anger; impulsive reactions etc.; they cannot come; He has got a shock absorber. And, therefore, patience, freedom from impulsive reaction; not being vulnerable

to emotional disturbances are all benefits he gets. In fact, he is an emotionally immunized person as a bhokta; So emotional resistance is the second benefit.

And

the third and final is as a pramatha; as an observer his perspective of

the creation is samatvam. Samatvam: whatever be the type of his experience;

maana apamana, sukha,

dukha; sheetha ushna etc. his mind

enjoys **samatmam or equanimity which**

means he is not subject to raga and dvesha. So these are the transformations, which will take place as a

result of this knowledge; and Sri Krishna concludes by pointing that to obtain

these benefits, there is no shortcut, everyone has to go through all the five stages.

One

has to go through all the five stages to attain this phalam called jeevan mukthi.

Take away:

Gyani Bhakta, since his

actions come from love, compassion without expectation and concern; the quality

of the actions are excellent; because the mind is undisturbed; the performance

is always better; And therefore every action is appropriate and sound action.

Source of all

problems, Kama:

In

fact all your emotional problems begin with this kama. And this kama comes up because of the erroneous conclusion that I am apurna.

Kama

risers due to erroneous feeling that I am incomplete at the intellectual level but it manifests itself at emotional level.

Why study scriptures?

Although

our problems are emotional; their root is intellectual; and therefore you have to study the scriptures and solve the problem at intellectual level; then it will gradually transform your emotional personality.

Nidhidhyasanam:

Normally,

the nature I now know is the lower

nature;

that I am so and so; born on such and such a date and time; with following

qualification; so many years old; whatever your bio-data I give now; they all

belong to the incidental ahamkara. I have to remind myself of my higher atma

nature; this self-reminder is called Nidhidhyasanam.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy