

Taking Decisions: Swamiji Special Talk for New Years 2024

This is Swamiji's special talk for New Year 2024 and highlights how Bagawad Gita is practical even today. I believe many of the guidelines can be followed in today's world – whether we are managing our lives or a company or a part of a company and make it better.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 159 – Chapter 12 Bhakti Yoga Verses 12 and 13

In this chapter, Lord Krishna discusses five stages of bhakti yoga:

1. Sakama karma bhakta, using religion for worldly benefits, not necessarily for spiritual benefits. But we should follow two rules:
 1. Do not use immoral or unrighteous methods; in other words, use only dharmic methods.
 1. Use the enjoyment and benefits as a gift from the lord. Change your attitude also and take is eeswara prasadam. This will refine the mind and prepare for the next step of bhakti yoga.
2. Nişkāma karma: Desires becomes selfless desire. My

actions benefit more number of people. Karma is done for the benefit of others.

3. Ishta devata upasana: Mind is refined sufficiently to withdraw external world.
4. Eka or viśvarūpa upsana
5. Nirguna Eeswara upasana or advaida jñānam is the highest level of bhakti yoga.

If one passes through all five stages of bhakti yoga, one becomes sthira pragya.

Verse 12

Knowledge is indeed superior to meditation without knowledge, meditation with knowledge is superior to mere knowledge. Renunciation of the results of actions is superior to meditation. There is peace after renunciation.

In this verse, Lord Krishna talks about four types of sadhanas, in the order of superiority:

1. Abyāsaḥ: Meditation without knowledge; Meditation upon God in one form or another; a meditation not backed by knowledge; without understanding what god is.
2. jñānam: Knowledge without meditation; By the thorough study of scriptures one person may know what god is; knowledge without practicing meditation.
3. Dhyānam: Knowledge with meditation or meditation with knowledge. A mixture of knowledge and meditation. Dhyānam is practiced after understanding god.
4. Karma pala thyagam: Dedicating all the karma palam to the lord and taking them as a gift from the Lord.

In the previous verse a list of five sadhanas are given, where karma pala thyagam is the highest. Here karma pala thyagam is elevated by Krishna to encourage sadhanas. Unfortunately, the majority of the people are ready only for the lowest study of

sakama karma. To encourage people, Lord Krishna glorifies and elevates sakama karma from the lowest to highest.

Krishna says the lowest one in this list mechanical sadhana is abyāsaḥ. But we must notice that even the lowest one is better than not doing any sadhana.

Most people, even the people who are not familiar with scripture, offer anything new to the Lord by placing it in front of the lord, doing puja and taking that item back. This is practicing sakama karma.

With this verse, the first part of Chapter 12 is over.

Verse 13

My devotee is a non-hater of all beings, is friendly compassionate, free from 'mine' notion, free from 'I' notion, same in comfort as well as discomfort, and forbearing.

A person goes through all five stages of bhakti yoga, he becomes a jñāni. The knowledge is aham brahma asmi or I am Brahman, or the Lord is not different than me. Paramatma and Jivatma are not two entities; they are two words for one and the same. Similar to wave and ocean are not two different things, but they are two different for the substance water.

How does such a bhakta conduct himself in the world? What are the characteristics or behaviors of this advaida jñāni?

First benefit of this knowledge is that a person having this knowledge, will follow this sadhana. The second benefit is that whatever is a natural trait of a realized person, it should be taken as a sadhana as natural trait. When a person practices spiritual sadhana, he obtains a state of mind which will be useful in enjoying this world.

The first trait of a jivan muktha or jñāni is freedom from hate: He or she does not hate any person in the world. Any

form of hatred is not justifiable, because all people are divine and innately good. If we are not allowed to hate a person, are we allowed to hate the wrong action of a person? This also does not deserve hatred, because by hating the behavior, you are not changing the character of the person. The appropriate actions in this instance are sāma (educating), dhana (charity), beda (change), and dhanda (punishment). Note that the longer the list of hated items and people, the further away I am from mokśa.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 158 – Chapter 12 Bhakti Yoga Verses 10 and 11

Bagawan Krishna presents the important teaching of bhakti yoga. Bakti yoga is not a particular sadhana, but it is the name of the entire range of sadhana everyone should go through. Bagawan Krishna starts with the highest level, he starts with the fifth and final step is jñāna yoga sadhana, which is closer to moksha. This is nirguna savanna manana nidhithyasanam. jñāna yoga is the name of bhakti yoga at the highest level. This form of bhakti yoga is difficult for many, then they should practice the fourth level, which is saguna eeswara upasana. Saguna eeswara is viśvarūpa eeswara, which is ashta murti eeswara. Ashta Moorthi of virad or viswa roopa Eeswara represented by:

- Five elements are panca bootha are five Moorthy.
- Surya stands for all stars and is the sixth.
- The moon stands for all planets and is the seventh.
- All the living beings are the eighth.

Ishta roopa upasana itself uplifts you to viśvarūpa upasana which will lift you to nirguna brahma upsana.

If mind is not subtle enough to conceive viśvarūpa eeswara, then practice eka roopa. Chose a personal god and practice eka rūpa upsana which Krishna calls abyāsaḥ yoga. A person with raga dwesha will find it difficult to visualize viśvarūpa eeswara, then that person can practice abyāsaḥ yoga or ishta devata upasana. By ishta devata upasana one can not directly achieve moksha, but one can indirectly attain moksha, ishta devata upasana will lift devotee to nirguna eeswara upasana and bringing to liberation. Ishta devata upasana is paramparā karanam, that is indirect means of achieving liberation.

Upsana is mental activity and implies withdrawing all sense organ and a mental activity. Upsana is a introverted activity and is possible only when a person is ready to withdraw from mental activity. If a person is extrovert or rājo guna pradhāna that person will find it difficult to practice upsana.

Verse 10

If you are incapable of abyāsaḥ yoga also, be devoted to My works. Even by doing works for My sake, you will attain liberation.

If a person is not ready for eka rūpa upsana, then commit to karma yoga or activities. The activities can be classified as:

1. Niṣkāma karma: Activities dedicated to the service of the society; this will purify spiritually and qualify you for ishta devata upasana. For example, trees produce fruits for themselves but for others also. River flows through the plains for the benefit of other living beings, not for itself. Niṣkāma karma will lead to liberation indirectly by making the mind ready for

eka rūpa to aneka rūpa to arupa or nirguna brahman.

2. Sakama karma: But many of us have many worldly desires and not ready for niṣkāma kara, then practice sakama karma. Sakama karma is fulfilling legitimate worldly desires but dedicate that karma also to lord and enjoy the results as a prasadam from the lord. Don't call the results of sakama karma palam your accomplishment. After this, you can start practicing niṣkāma karma.

Verse 11

If you are not able to do this also, then, taking to My worship, renounce the results of all actions with self-restraint.

Niṣiddha Karma like himsa (killing insects) etc. Some of these are inevitable.

In rare cases, niṣiddha karma is also ok, says Sankarachariyar. That is why some tamasic activities are mentioned in shastras. That is why some tamasic rituals are mentioned in scriptures.

When a person does sakama karma, he expects a worldly benefit out of it. You dedicate that result to eeswara, do not take it as the result of your efforts. Then selfish actions will have the capacity to purify the mind. Dedicate the results of all the karmas – kama karmas and niṣiddha karma to the lord.

If we practice sakama karma for a length of time, then we can transcend to niṣkāma karma. We will grow out of petty desires and life will become niṣkāma karma pradhāna karma yoga.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 157 – Chapter 12 Bhakti Yoga Verses 6 to 9

Lord Krishna presents bhakti yoga in five levels. The fifth level is jñāna yoga and that is the highest level of bhakti yoga. The lord in jñāna is nirguna eeswara. The worship of nirguna eeswara is unique, and it is not a physical worship because nirguna eeswara does not have a physical form. So the worship is in the form study and inquiry of nirguna eeswara. The inquiry consisting of sravanam, mananam nidhithyasanam.

jñāna yoga form of worship is presented in verses 3, 4 and 5. The technical word for jñāna yoga aksharobasanam. Lord Krishna admits jñāna yoga is difficult because:

1. Nirguna brahman is not available unobjectifiable and inconceivable. It can be only received in one form only and that is in the form of myself.
2. Requires lot of qualifications like viveka, vairāgyam etc.

Since jñāna yoga is very difficult, people follow simpler yoga like bhakti yoga, karma yoga etc. For moksha, many paths are not available, and scriptures clearly says jñānam is the only path. If darkness is the problem, the only solution is to bring light. All other acts like sweeping the floor, chanting slokas etc. will not remove darkness. Ignorance goes away only by jñānam or knowledge. You can get knowledge in any field only by inquiry and the relevant study. That should be extended to jñānam. If jñāna yoga is difficult, make it is easy, by preparing and qualifying for jñāna yoga. Jñāna yoga is difficult for unprepared person and easy for a prepared person.

Verses 6 and 7

Keeping Me as the primary goal and dedicating all actions unto Me, some devotees worship, mediating upon Me with undivided attention. For them, whose minds are set on Me, I shall soon become the savior from the ocean of samsara, which is best with death, Oh Arjuna.

Those who find jñāna yoga to be difficult can practice saguna brahma upasana, meditating up on eeswara with attributes. Saguna brahman can be:

1. Viśvarūpa saguna brahman, as described in the 11th Chapter. Dedicate all actions to the Lord. Dedication is the attitude that after I complete my action, I will get a karma palam as per the laws of karma. I will accept the resulting karma palam, committing to the goal of nirguna eeswara. This will make them qualified for the fifth step of nirguna eeswara bhakti.
2. Ishta devata brahman

Verse 8

Fix the mind on Me alone. Fix the intellect on Me alone. Thereafter you will dwell in Me alone. There is no doubt.

In this stage, fix the emotional mind in viśvarūpa lord and the intellectual mind should be convinced of viśvarūpa eeswara as the world. Akasha, vayu, agni all are eeswara. The glory of viśvarūpa bhakti is I am never away from eeswara. This should be the conviction born out of scriptural study. If not convinced, continue the study until you are convinced of viśvarūpa eeswara.

Verse 9

If you are not able to fix the mind firmly on Me, then seek to attain Me by means of abyāsaḥ yoga, Oh Arjuna!

If you are not able to come to viśvarūpa eeswara, come to eka roopa eeswara or Ishta devata upasana. Choose any particular form or any particular form of relationship – like a father, mother or friend. Ishta devata bhakti can be formed by dwelling on purana paryanām. Krishna calls this abyāsaḥ yoga.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 152 – Chapter 11 Viśvarūpa Darshana Yogaha, Verses 51 to 55

Viśvarūpam is a mixture of positive and negative; As long as we are in the relative world, everything has an opposite. If Lord is Srishti kariyam, the same lord will also be laya karanam. Lord will give both punyam and pavam. We should see them as complementary and accept or reject them both. But immature mind only accepts positive aspect of creation. Mind is interested in accepting birth but not willing to reject negatives like death.

Arjuna was able to see everything in creation, but not able to accept the death of his friends and relatives. So he requests the Lord to withdraw dhivya chakshu. Krishna obliges and removes the dhivya chakshu from Arjuna. All of these are reported by Sanjaya.

Withdrawal of viśvarūpa means removal of dhivya chakshu. Dhivya chakshu is freedom from ahankara and mamakara. Ahankara and mamakara are obstacles to dhivya chakshu or divine vision. Withdrawal of dhivya chakshu is getting back ahankara and mamakara.

Verse 51

Arjuna said – Oh Krishna! Seeing this pleasing human form of Yours, I have now become peaceful. I have come to normalcy.

Arjuna looks upon Krishna as eka roopa bhakti. When aneka roopa bhakti is frightening, Aroopa Brahman will not appeal at all. It doesn't matter, we can confine to eka roopa bhakti.

Verse 52

The Lord said – This form of Mine which you have seen is very difficult to see Even gods are always craving for the vision of this form.

Lord Krishna glorifies viśvarūpa darshanam. He says this darshanam is extremely difficult, and it is a glorious vision. Even gods regularly pray for this darshanam.

Verse 53

Neither by the study of the Vedas, nor by austerity, nor by charity, nor by worship can I be seen in this form as you have seen Me.

If viśvarūpa darshanam is a rare thing, what are the means of getting viśvarūpa darshanam. Lord Krishna gives the means in verses 53 and 54. The means given by Krishna is intense bhakti. Other sadhanas are important but will not lead to viśvarūpa darshanam, only bhakti alone will lead you to viśvarūpa darshanam. Other sadhanas mentioned are vedic scholarship, intense tapas or austerity and charity. These sadhanas will not give viśvarūpa darshanam. But this doesn't mean we should drop these sadhanas, only that they will not give viśvarūpa darshanam.

Verse 54

Oh Arjuna! However, by undivided devotion I can be seen in this form known truly and merged into Oh Arjuna!

Lord Krishna gives the means of viśvarūpa darshanam which is bhakti or intense love for the Lord.

Three levels of bhakti:

1. Arthaha and Artha: Devotion to lord for the benefit of worldly goals; Sakama bhakti. We use this sadhana as a means for worldly benefit. Purely commercial bhakti. Here god is a means to worldly benefit. This bhakti is better than no bhakti and this bhakti makes mind purer.

Worldly benefits have three defects:

1. They are mixed with painAthrupthi, we seek more and more
1. Bandha tatvam; binding nature.

- Mumukshu or Ananya bhakti where god is an end itself; god is both sadhana and sadhanam.
- jñāni: Look upon God as myself; god is neither the means nor destination but the god is the traveler; God is not sought but god is the very seeker himself. Lord is neither sadhanam or sathyam, but I myself. With this knowledge, the devotee becomes one with the Lord. The notion of division between jivatma and paramatta is removed and this is merger with Lord.

Verse 55

He who does works for me, who is My devotee, who keeps Me as the supreme goal, who is free from attachment, and who is free from hatred towards all reaches Me. Oh Arjuna;

This is a seed verse, which will be expanded in the next chapter. Bhakti is not a particular sadhana but it is the entire range of spiritual sadhana which will take one to moksha.

This is divided into three and Lord Krishna will divide them into five. The three levels of sadhana are:

1. Karma lakshana bhakti: Bhakti expressed in the form of karma yoga; Karma Yoga is impossible without devotion. Karma yoga involves two stages. In the first stage of karma yoga I am a kartha doing various actions which are converted to karma palam making me to karma boktha. Karma palam can be favorable and unfavorable. As a kartha, I am dedicating all karma palam to the lord accepting them as Eeswara prasadam. Every experience in life is karma palam. Because of this, karma yoga becomes a form of bhakti.
2. Upasana roopa bhakti: Bhakti in the form of meditation or dhyānam. This is required because karma yoga is always an extroverted act. An extroverted mind can never realize God. The real god is not outside, is inside so an extroverted mind can never realize God. Here we visualize lord within ourselves.
3. jñāna lakshana bhakti: Study of scripture to discover the real nature of God. Study of scriptures is also a form of bhakti.

A person must practice these three forms or stages of bhakti. Lord Krishna elaborates the bhakti in the next chapter.

Krishna state first become a karma yogi. Accepting all results in life is karma yoga. Slowly convert goal as God himself. Don't lean on the world, lean on God. Graduate from world dependence to God dependence. Train saying all the time that my support is God. Gradually become a theevara mumukshu where moksha is the only goal. As you lean more and more on higher things, the attachment to other things will diminish. Freedom from raga dwesha means presence or absence of anything will not impact me. Developing Sādhana Catuṣṭaya Sampatti is our goal, Bhagavan will give other means like Guru etc. Develop

viveka, develop vairāgyam and develop mumukshu and become a bhakta.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 152 – Chapter 11 Viśvarūpa Darshana Yogaha, Verses 47 to 50

Arjuna was not mature enough to withstand the viśvarūpa darshanam, because viśvarūpa darshanam is seeing the whole universe as the lord. This means having a reverential attitude towards every event in creation. If birth is an integral part of Bagawan, death is also an integral part of Bagawan. So, accepting viśvarūpa darshanam means accepting the death of anyone at any time. This means we should have a mature mind to accept any and all situations. How do we make our minds mature? We start with ishta devata or eka roopa appreciation. Ishta devata bhakti can relieve our pain, and eventually develop viśvarūpa bhakti or aneka roopa bhakti.

Verse 47

The lord said – Oh Arjuna! By my power this supreme has been shown to you by Me who am pleased with you. Such a form of Mine which is radiant, universal, limitless and primal has not been seen by anyone other than you.

Krishna says I chose to show the viśvarūpa darshanam with the power of Maya Sakthi. This viśvarūpa darshanam can be frightening for some and can be wonderful for others.

Yoga in this context refers to Maya Sakthi.

Verse 48

Neither by the study of vedas and yajnas nor by charity nor by rituals nor by severe austerities can I been seen in this form in the world of mortals by anyone other than you, Oh Arjuna!

Krishna highlights the bhakti as an important sadhana to appreciate viśvarūpa darshanam. All sadhanas are equally important, but in some context to highlight a particular sadhana, scriptures will bring down other sadhanas. In those instances, we should focus on the highlighted sadhana and not on the other sadhanas which may be criticized in those instances. Bhakti or devotion alone will help in viśvarūpa darshanam.

Verse 49

Seeing such a frightening from of Mine, may you have neither fear nor delusion. With a pleased mind free from fear, see again that very same form of Mine.

Appreciating the value of moksha itself requires tremendous maturity. Scriptures do not force moksha but allow for us to work for artha and kama, but by following dharma. Whatever the result, accept it as a blessing from the Lord.

Verse 50

Sanjaya said – Having said thus to Arjuna, Lord Krishna showed again His own form. And, having assumed the pleasing form once again, the great Lord consoled that frightened Arjuna.

Arjuna requested to change the form and Krishna change the form from aneka roopa to eka roopa. But Arjuna's fear continues and Krishna consoles Arjuna by taking the original form.

Withdrawing viśvarūpa means withdrawing dhivya chakshu (a mind which is not over powered by ahankara and mamakara). As long as one has ahankara and mamakara one will not be able to see totality or viśvarūpa.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 151 – Chapter 11 Viśvarūpa Darshana Yogaha, Verses 44 to 46

Lord Krishna pointed out that he is kala tattvam – time principle. Time and space are inseparable; when you appreciate lord as kalaha you also appreciate the lord as desaha. Then everything existing in time must also be Eeswara. We won't be able to answer questions like when the time was created or where was the space created or what was the object with which space created. Bagawan is time, space and objects. Then Bagawan includes events. And lord is the order or laws which govern all the events. Desa, kala, vasthu, sambavaha (events) and niyamaha (laws) are all Bagawan. Whenever I experience any one of these, I am experiencing Bagawan, but we are not aware of experiencing eeswara darshanam.

Madhyama bhakta asks for viśva roopa darśana not realizing that he is already experiencing visa roopa darśana when he looks at the universe or nature. Madhyama bhakta looks at the universe and appreciates it as Bagawan. Uthama bhakta looks at the universe as himself. At this point, Arjuna feels a deep guilt because he did not look at Lord Krishna as viśva roopa Eeswara.

Stages of appreciation of eeswara:

Stage 1: Bagawan creates the world. Nimitha kāraṇa eeswara or eka roopa eeswara.

Stage 2: Bagawan appears ass the world – Upadana kāraṇa eeswara or aneka roopa eeswara.

stage 3: Bagawan is the world. niverta kārāṇa eeswara or Aroopa eeswara.

Verse 44

Therefore, saluting and prostrating the body, I propitiate You, the adorable Lord. You should forgive my offences just as a father forgives those of the son, just as a friend forgives those of the friend, and just as a husband forgives those of the wife.

Arjuna feels that it is a great insult as a friend; in fact treating the Lord as friend is a form of bhakti and he offers prāyaścitta namaskara. He requests the Lord to forgive and forget the offenses just as:

1. The parents forgive offenses of children.
2. A husband forgiving the offenses of wife.
3. A friend forgiving the insults and offenses of a friend.

Verse 45

Seeing the universal form which has not been seen before. I am delighted. At the same time, my mind is afflicted with fear. Oh Lord! Show me that familiar form itself. Oh God of gods! Oh Lord, who is the abode of the universe! Be gracious.

One part of Arjuna's mind says he is one of the few luckiest persons as he received Dhivya Chakshu and this part makes him happy. At the same time, he is also seeing the Lord as a destroyer and that part makes him distressed with fear. Between these two, bhayam or fear is more. Because Dhivya Chakshu was an artificial one given by the Lord. We must get Dhivya Chakshu by practicing karma yoga. When it is naturally developed by the practice of karma yoga, then it won't be fearful. If we want to go from eka roopa bhakti to aneka roopa bhakti, we have to reduce raga dwesha tremendously; ahankāra and mamakara must be reduced. Then viśva roopa will

be enjoyable.

Verse 46

I wish to see you in the same form as before with crown, with mace and with disc in your hand. Oh Lord, with a thousand arms! Oh Lord with universal form! Appear with that very same four-armed form.

The three stages Arjuna goes through are:

1. Acharya – Wonderment
2. Bhayam – Fear
3. Bhakti – Reverence

How does Arjuna say four hands? There had been many explanations. We can conclude that either Krishan had four hands or Arjuna is confused. There is no need for deep thinking. It just that Arjuna wants Krishna to appear as his friend.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 149 – Chapter 11 Viśvarūpa Darshana Yogaha, Verses 33 to 34

Acting according dharma is surrendering individual will to Dharma. Dharma is the will of God, surrendering to dharma is surrendering to the will of the god. When you act according to your will without regard to Dharma, then the individual will is not in alignment with Dharma or the will of God. Arjuna's will based on raga dwesha is to run away from the

battlefield; his will based on dharma is to fight the war. He has two choices, going by raga dwesha and not fight the war or going by dharma and fight the war. Dharmic based action is use of free will and adharmic based action is abuse of free will. Choosing the will based on raga dwesha will be abusing free will. Karma yoga requires one to follow dharma, so a karma yogi surrenders his free will and raga dwesha to dharma or to the free will of God. This voluntary surrender is called bhakti. Saving the people from adharma is the duty of kshatriya.

Verse 35

Sanjaya said – Having heard these words of Krishna, the trembling Arjuna saluted and, bowing down with great fear, falteringly spoke to Krishna once again with joined palms.

Arjuna now understood that Krishna is not responsible for the suffering of people. Krishna's compassion is not to alter the results of karma, but to pass the karma palam and maintain dharma. If God alters the results of karma for one's benefit, then one may benefit but the society as a whole will suffer.

The laws of karma should continue to work for the benefit of the whole society. We should learn to accept the suffering without complaining to God. Instead of saying I am suffering, learn to say I am becoming purer because the accumulated pavam is getting reduced. God's compassion is shown by maintaining dharma.

By practicing prāyaścitta karma, I am producing positive karma, which will produce agami that will neutralize praraptha karma. Whether prāyaścitta will neutralize praraptha will depend on the strength of praraptha karma. Every praraptha karma can be weak, medium or strong. Prāyaścitta can be helpful for weak and for medium it will help managing the praraptha. But when it is strong, praraptha will not help, but it will create punyam for the future. However, when karma matures, we will not know whether it is weak or strong. God

is defined as the order of creation. So, surrendering to God is surrendering to the order of creation. The law of karma is like law of gravity, it will not change because you dislike.

Surrender is the physical expression of intellectual appreciation and acceptance of the law of karma or the order of creation. Ripeness of bhakti is that bhayam or fear is gone, because I learn to go with the laws of karma. Bakti melts away the fear of raga.

Verse 36

Arjuna said – Oh Lord! It is but proper that the world is delighted and gratified by the glorification of You. The frightened demons run in all directions and all the hosts of siddhas bow down to you.

Arjuna's three stages of viśvarūpa darshanam

1. Wonderment
2. Fear
3. Surrender

One must come eka roopa to viśvarūpa to nirguna roopa, universal laws of dharma. If you want to conquer fear you must expand your mind to appreciate totality or viśvarūpa and the laws of karma. As an individual, you cannot escape the laws of karma. For that you should transcend ahankara. That can happen only with viśvarūpa darshanam.

When you are narrow minded, immature and ahankara is in force, religion and God become sources of fear. But the pleasure that comes with the appreciation of totality and viśvarūpa is ananda.

Total identification is Brahman; Zero or no identification is Eeswara; in both have no samsara. But we all have a selected few identification (family, friends etc.) that gives samsara. This will not make them escape from the laws of karma. We

should pray to give the strength to accept the karma palam.

Verse 37

Oh great Lord! Why would they not salute You who are greater than even Brahma and who are the first creator? Oh limitless one who is the ruler of gods, and the abode of the universe! You are the cause and the effect. You are that imperishable Truth which is beyond both.

Any one who appreciates totality and doing namaskara is intuitive and natural. If you read any science after viśvarūpa darshanam, wonderment will not be avoided. If you are a bhakta it will lead to namaskara and surrender. Whoever has not understood the scriptures properly is missing a totally different dimension. If I say there is no god, it is not absence of God, I don't have the sense to appreciate viśvarūpa and harmony. I don't live in the universe, the universe is in me.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 148 – Chapter 11 Viśvarūpa Darshana Yogaha, Verses 33 to 34

Seeing the Viśvarūpa darshanam, Arjuna goes through two emotions. The first emotion was wonder and the second was fear, because he saw Lord destroying everything. Arjuna had a question whether the Lord was compassionate. He asked Krishna who are you and what are your functions. From the standpoint of time, the Lord is called kala or Yamaha the one who controls everything. He also states that I am going to kill the warriors on both sides, because their time has come.

Arjuna is simply an instrument. According to the law of karma the time has come for Bhishma, Dhrona and gowravas have to die. Krishna, as kala principle, is only giving an opportunity for Arjuna to be an instrument in the process.

Superficial study of verse 33 may lead to fatalistic view because everything is pre-determined, and we are all only puppets or instruments and the Bagawan holds the strings. Sastras rejects fatalism and do not consider humans as puppets because humans have free will. When we are rejecting fatalism, we are not rejecting fate. Fate is very much accepted by sastra. Fate is the result of action done by us in the past, this and previous jenma. Karma palam is otherwise known as destiny, prarabtham, daivam. Prarabdha karma influences our life, but not the horoscope or the planetary position. Fate is not the only factor influencing life. In addition to fate, free will (purusārtha) decides your future. If you say fate and free will decides future, it is sastra. If you say fate alone decides your future, it is fatalism. Free will has no place. In fatalism everything is pre-determined by God. God's will alone exist, and we are all mere instruments.

Minor advantages of this point of views are:

1. You need not take responsibility for your atrocity and avoid guilt.
2. This theory is useful to accept the sufferings of life. In sastra, fatalism is temporarily used to accept suffering.

Six problems of this theory of fatalism:

1. God becomes kartha and we are all only instruments. All the pavam and punyam will go to Bagawan. Bagawan becomes mahā samsari.
2. Since we are all only instruments only, we will not get

any karma palam – punyam and pavam.

3. All the sufferings are the responsibility of the god. That god must be most cruel god.
4. Not all people enjoy uniformly; some are happier than others, so God is partial.
5. Since we are all only instruments, we need not know what proper action is and what improper action is. Study of dharma sastrha is not required.
6. As mere instruments, we need not choose a course of action; we will never have conflict in life. As long as there are choices, there is free will. Only animals do not have conflict because they have no free will and they have no choice.

Free will and fate are the two factors that contribute to our future. For animals only fate contributes to their future. Some of our actions are because of fate and some others are because of our free will and yet others are because of a mix of the two. So, you are one of the contributors to our future along with fate. By our prayer we try to control our fate and by our freewill we try to control our choice.

Bagawan harmonizes the world with dharma when I align my free will with dharma, then I become the instrument of the Lord. Arjuna faces this conflict before the war. Dharma sastra says Arjuna's duty to fight the war. But his raga dwesha says that he should not hurt his next of kins. Krishna tells him not to go by raga dwesha but go by dharma. Dharma is god's will. When free will is aligned with dharma, then I become an instrument in the hands of the Lord. Verse 33 says align your will with dharma.

Verse 34

Kill Drona, Bhishma, Jayadratha, Karna as well as other great warriors who are killed by Me. Do not fear. Fight, you will conquer the enemies in battle.

According to the law of karma or law of dharma has indicated the death of all the warriors in the battlefield. In our life, our fate is not knowable and that is why it is called adhrishtam. Therefore, we should do our action as though everything in our control and consider all the result as the action of God.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 147 – Chapter 11 Viśvarūpa Darshana Yogaha, Verses 30 to 33



Viśvarūpa consists of everything including time. Time and space are an integral property of creation. Time and space can never be separated from creation, they arise along with creation. When Arjuna experiences the viśvarūpa, he also experiences time principle. This invisible all-pervading time principle or kala tattvam is symbolized by the mouth of the lord. This kala tattvam has twofold power – creation and destruction. But Arjuna, being in a battlefield, sees only the destruction part of the kala tattvam. If he had seen the totality, creation and destruction, he would have seen the mangalam swaroopam and amangala swaroopam of the Lord. We only have two options – accept the whole as mangalam or reject the whole as amangalam. But we only want to accept the birth as mangalam and not accept the death as mangalam. Either totally embrace the whole world or reject the whole world. As long as you accept only one part and reject the other part, there will be samsara.

Swallowing all the people from all directions with blazing mouths, You repeatedly lick with relish. Filling the entire universe with radiance. Your fierce rays scorch everyone, Oh Lord.

Bagawan doesn't seem to have any sympathy towards people crying for the death of family and friends. But by giving intelligence, Bagawan has given us an opportunity to know what death is. If we do not grow and mature, Bagawan will have no sympathy. Kala tattvam affects all the time – not just at the old age. Arjuna wonders whether Bagawan is extremely cruel. When suffering in life, we all will get this doubt. We may even doubt the existence of Bagawan.

Verse 31

Who are you with this fierce form? Tell me, Oh Supreme Lord! Salutation be to You. Be gracious. I desire to know You, the primal one. Indeed, I do not know Your function.

Arjuna asks who are you – the frightening one or the gracious one? Who is Bagawan and what is your function? Why can't the whole world be beautiful?

Verse 32

The Lord said – I am the mighty Time, the destroyer of the world. I am proceeding to destroy the people here. All the warriors who are arrayed in both the armies will cease to exist even without you.

Bagawan answers that he is kala tattvam. There are two planes in Vedanta, vyāvahārika tattvam and pāramarthika tattvam. With regard to vyāvahārika tattvam either you accept totally or reject it totally. There is no good or bad. You accept both or reject both. You renounce both and death. This requires inner strength. Total acceptance also requires strength. This strength you get only with atma Jñānam.

Partial rejection or acceptance is not acceptable. As

vyāvahārika tattvam, Bagawan creates and destroys. Pāramarthika tattvam -in which there is no time and no space and there are no pairs. No good and bad; no death and birth.

Verse 33

Therefore, get up and attain fame. Conquering the enemies, enjoy the prosperous kingdom. Indeed, they have already been killed by Me. Be a mere instrument, Oh Arjuna!

Krishna says the time has come for people on the battlefield to die. Only the means of destruction is not decided, but the end of the people has already been decided by kala tattvam. The option that Arjuna has is to join and do his duty by defeating the enemies and establishing dharma. Arjuna is only an instrument in Bagawan's hand.

When we read in this contest, it looks like he is only an instrument or puppet of the Bagawan. Looks like Bagawan has already decided everything and everything is predetermined. Seems like human beings do not have any choice and do not have any free will. There is only one doer and Bagawan determines everything. This will be the wrong conclusion that we can come to from this verse. Human beings do have free will.

