PREAMBLE - Chapter 13 "Nature, the enjoyer and consciousnes" KSHETRA- KSHETRGYA VIBHAG YOG"

Based on its content, the eighteen chapters of the Bhagavad Gita can be divided into three sections. The first six chapters describe Karm Yog or the path of duty. The second set, from chapters seven to twelve, glorify the path of bhakti or loving devotion of God. They also describe the opulence of God as the divine nectar that nourishes devotion. The third set, starting from this chapter, expounds upon tattva jñāna or the of knowledge scriptural terms and principles.

In this chapter, Shree Krishna introduces two terms—kṣhetra (the field) and kṣhetrajña (knower of the field). In simple terms, the 'field' may be considered the body and the soul as the 'knower of the field.' However, the field is actually much more than just the physical body—it includes the mind, intellect, ego, and all other components of material energy that are part of our personality. In broader terms, except for the soul, who is the 'knower of the field,' all material aspects of our entire personality are considered—the 'field' of the body.

When a farmer sows' paddy in his field, he can only harvest paddy and not wheat or maize from that field. Similarly, the good or bad thoughts and actions that we sow in our field, that is our body, we harvest the resultant destiny. The Buddha taught: "All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, and it is made of our thoughts." Thus, as we think, that is what we become. The great American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson said: "The ancestor of every action is a thought." Therefore, it is necessary to cultivate appropriate thoughts and actions in the field of our body. For this, we should be able to differentiate between kṣhetra, the field, and kṣhetrajña, the knower of the field.

Shree Krishna gives a detailed analysis of these two aspects of human existence. He starts by enumerating the material elements that encompass kṣhetra, the field of the human body. He calls the feelings, sentiments, emotions, etc., that arise in this field (body) as modifications, and the virtues and pious good qualities purify the field and illuminate it with knowledge. This knowledge helps us realize and understand the existence of our soul, which is the kṣhetrajña or the knower of the field. Shree Krishna then starts describing God, the supreme knower of the fields of all living creatures. He says that the Supreme Lord possesses opposite attributes at the same time, which seem contradictory.

Understand that God is all-pervading in His creation, yet He sits in the heart of every living being. Thus, He is the Supreme Soul.

After describing the Supreme Soul, the soul, and the material nature of the living beings, Shree Krishna explains which of these is responsible for their actions. Also, who is responsible for the cause and effect in the universe at large. Those who understand these differences and identify the correct causes of actions; are the ones who see the ultimate truth; and are situated in knowledge. They do not degrade themselves by the illusions of their minds and perceive the presence of the Supreme Soul in every living being. In the same material nature, they are able to identify a variety of living beings and look at all existence

pervaded by a common spiritual substratum. With this knowledge, they attain consciousness of the Brahman or God-realization.

(Preamble- Courtesy: The Songs of GOD - Swami Mukundananda)

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"arjuna uvāca,
prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva,
kṣetraṁ kṣetra-jñam eva ca..□
etad veditum icchāmi,
jñānaṁ jñeyaṁ ca keśava"..□□

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Meaning:

Arjun said, “O Keshav, I wish to understand what are prakṛiti and puruṣh, and what are kṣhetra and kṣhetrajña? I also wish to know what is true knowledge, and what is the goal of this knowledge?

Explanation:

In some editions of the Bhagavad Gita, this verse has been omitted, and the next verse figures as the first verse of the thirteenth chapter.

Arjuna asks this question and, in this question, and Arjuna gives six technical words, generally used in the vēdānta. Technical words used in any science is called Paribhāṣa śabdaḥ. In English we call it jargons. And medical jargon, jargon is a technical word used in that particular science. Like in economics, they say inflation. Whereas when you talk of inflating your cycle tyre, it has a different meaning. So, we have got technical words; they are called Paribhāṣa śabdaḥ; Arjuna introduces, six Paribhāṣa śabdas, technical words, used in vēdānta and he asks for clarification. I have heard them, and I would like to know what exactly those concepts are. So, what are those six words. No.1 prakr̥ti; No 2. Puruṣaḥ; No.3 Kṣetraṁ; No.4 kṣētrajña; No.5 Jñānam; and No.6 Jñēyaṁ. These are the 6 words, generally they go in pairs; prakr̥ti and Puruṣaḥ, one pair; kṣetraṁ and kṣētrajña, another; then jñānam and jñēyaṁ. Ethat, the group of the technical words, vēdithum icchami. And here even though Arjuna has used six words, some of the words are almost synonymous. Still Arjuna perhaps is not clearly and distinctly enumerated.

And according to Vēdānta, it includes our mind also, because according to śāstra, mind is also a product of the subtle five elements. Therefore, mind is also a form of matter only and that is why the mind is influenced by matter. When there is a change in biochemistry, when there is a change in hormones, it changes your mind and emotions; from that it is very clear that mind is also another form of subtle matter. Therefore, prakṛti or kshetram includes the world, the mind and also the body, all of them are called prakṛti or kṣetraṁ. Krishna himself will elaborate that later.

Geeta has 700 shloks, this is additional one, therefore, we start from next.

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"śrī-bhagavān uvāca,
idaṁ śarīraṁ kaunteya,
kṣetram ity abhidhīyate..□
etad yo vetti taṁ prāhuḥ,
kṣetra-jña iti tad-vidaḥ"..□□

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Meaning:

Shree Bhagavaan said: This body is defined as the "field", O Kaunteya, and he who knows it is called the "knower of the field", in this manner, by the knowers of both.

Explanation:

Here, Shree Krishna begins explaining the topic of distinction between the body and spirit. The soul is divine, and can neither eat, see, smell, hear, taste, nor touch. It vicariously does all these works through the body- mind- intellect mechanism, which is thus termed as the field of activities. In modern science, we have terms like “field of energy.” A magnet has a magnetic field around it, which creates electricity on rapid movement. An electric charge has a force field around it. Here, the body is the receptacle for the activities of the individual. Hence, it is termed as kṣhetra (the field of activities).

This body that you are experiencing intimately is called kṣetraṁ. Śankarācārya gives several meanings for the word kṣetraṁ. Out of that we will see two meanings, which are relevant and beautiful.

First meaning of kshetram is that which is subject to decay and destruction. So, it means that which disintegrates, that which decays every movement and ultimately dies. In fact, the very word śarīram body also means the same only. It decays three- fold manner or tapas. One tāpā is rising from inside in the form of varieties of diseases etc. that is it is internal.

And the other type of tāpā, are coming from the outside or the environment, like dust pollution, noise pollution, carbon monoxide pollution, so many varieties of pollution. Any tāpam coming from the surrounding is one type of suffering: known as adhibouthika tāpam. What comes from inside is adhyātmica tāpam; like BP, sugar, etc. And the third one is that which is not caused by external or internal, that which is caused by the nature, or the karma. It is Adhi daivika tāpam caused by supernatural forces like thunder, lightning, or floods, all these things are the third ones.

Through these three-fold tāpas, the body is constantly tormented and while living the three-fold tāpas or burning, and after death also, the body is burned, by another type of fire called cremation fire. Therefore, while living also, it is burned (tavikkarom), after death also it is burned, therefore it is called kṣetraṁ.

The second meaning given for Kṣetraṁ is any agricultural land or field is called kṣetraṁ. A wet land which is used for raising crops or plants is called kṣetraṁ. And our physical body is comparable to a field. And why is the body compared to a field?

Śankarācārya says when we have got seeds in our hands, we can convert the seed into the plant. But that conversion requires a land. Similarly, we have done lot of Puṇya pāpa (sainted and sin) karmas in the past janma and all those karmas are like seeds and every karma can fructify into sukham and duḥkham. Just as seed can fructify into plant; karma can fructify into result; Good and holy karma into sukha phalam sin or paap karma into duḥkha phalam, bad results but that conversion requires a medium. Just as seed requires the medium of the field to become a plant and fructify, our karma also requires a medium; what is the medium, the physical body is the medium only through the body we can reap puṇya phalam, we can reap papa phalam. As long as you do not have a body, puṇyam will be there; but will never become sukham; pāpam will be there, it will never become dukham. The conversion requires an intermediary. Therefore, Śankarācārya says Kṣetravat kṣetraṁ. Only one word very very concise, precise, and brief i.e. the physical body and it includes mind and whole world.

And who says that: tadvidaḥ; the great jñānis who know about them, they say that it is called Kṣētrajñā. Therefore, in short Kṣētrajñā means conscious principle. Kṣetraṁ means matter principle; Kṣētrajñā means conscious principle or Consciousness. Now taking a little bit aside, what exactly is the nature of this consciousness is a fundamental question, because it is a mysterious thing which everybody tries to understand, all these sciences are even now struggling to understand what the phenomenon of consciousness is. According to vēdānta, consciousness has the following features:

1.Consciousness is not a part of the body, it is not a product of the body, is not a property of the body. Consciousness is an independent entity, according to vēdānta. So consciousness is not a part, product or property of the body.

2.Consciousness is an independent entity which pervades the body; Which body? inert body, and makes it sentient, cētanam. This is the second feature. Dēha vilakṣaṇam. It is different and pervades the body. Dēha vyāpihi.

3.The third feature is this consciousness which is independent principle is not limited by the boundaries of the body, which means it extends beyond the periphery of the body. Vyāpi sarvagatha; this is the third feature.

4.Then the fourth feature is: This consciousness will continue to exist, even when the body perishes. It is eternal. Previously we said all- pervading. Now we say it is eternal.

5.Final point is the surviving consciousness after the destruction of the body is not recognisable because there is no body through which it can manifest or express. For want of a manifesting medium, the surviving consciousness is not recognisable.

The soul or consciousness is distinct from the body- mind- intellect mechanism, but forgetful of its divine nature, it identifies with these material entities. Yet, because it has knowledge of the body, it is called kṣhetrajña (the knower of the field of the body). This terminology has been given by the self- realized sages, who were transcendentally situated at the platform of the soul, and perceived their distinct identity separate from the body.

Why do we need to know such esoteric terms? Shri Krishna uses these terms to lay the groundwork for the next shloka, which is one of the most important shlokas in the Gita. He wants to give a foundation that we can use a springboard to leap into the next shloka.

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"kṣetra-jñaṁ cāpi māṁ viddhi,
sarva-kṣetreṣu bhārata..□
kṣetra-kṣetrajñayor jñānaṁ,
yat taj jñānaṁ mataṁ mama"..□□

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Meaning:

And also, understand that I am the knower of all fields, O Bhaarata. That knowledge which pertains to the field and its knower, in my opinion, that is (real) knowledge.

Explanation:

Shri Krishna began the previous chapter by defining two terms: kshetra which means field, and kshetragnya which means the knower of the field, one who knows himself as distinct from the field. In this shloka, Shri Krishna uses these terms to indicate the identity or oneness of the kshetragnya in all kshetras. Let us try to understand this very important point. Like Arjuna did in the first chapter, most of us consider our self, our "I", as this body, and therefore get stuck in the sorrows of this world. As we understand the message of the

first six chapters, we understand that we are the eternal essence which is different than our body. We then understand from the next six chapters that Ishvara is the foundation of this world as the lower Prakriti or matter, and higher Prakriti or consciousness. Now, in this shloka, Shri Krishna says that there is no such distinction between the individual eternal essence and the foundation of this world. There is only one kshetragnya, and any notion of separation is illusory, caused by avidyaa or ignorance. This is the great statement, the mahaa vaakya "Tat Tvam Asi" of the Vedas. You and Ishvara are the same in essence, there is no difference.

The soul is only the knower of the individual field of its own body. Even in this limited context, the soul's knowledge of its field is incomplete. God is the knower of the fields of all souls, being situated as the Supreme Soul in the heart of all living beings. Further, God's knowledge of each kṣhetra is perfect and complete. By explaining these distinctions, Shree Krishna establishes the position of the three entities vis- à- vis each other— the material body, the soul, and the Supreme Soul.

When we first hear someone say that we are the same as Ishvara, we don't find it quite logical. We say, how can a body that is five feet eight inches tall be the same as Ishvara who is large enough to contain all the planets and stars of the universe within him? To answer this, we have to first remember that "Tat Tvam Asi" is not meant to be taken literally. Again, let us proceed step by step. First, let us understand the term "upaadhi". It means something that limits or conditions a more general thing. A wave is an upaadhi of water. A light bulb is an upaadhi of electricity. An ornament is an upaadhi of gold. We can obtain the general thing that the upaadhi limits or hides by a process of mental removal. Mentally remove the wave, and you get water. Mentally remove the bulb, you get electricity. Mentally remove the ornament, you get gold. We can take this even further. Mentally remove the labels Mercedes Benz and Maruti 800 from the word car, and you get metal, rubber, petrol and plastic. Mentally remove the labels Indian and American from the word person, and you get flesh, bones and blood.

Now, having undersood what an upaadhi is, and how it can be mentally removed, let us proceed to understand what the word "Asi" in "Tat Tvam Asi" indicates. It is not to be literally interpreted as Tvam (You) Asi (are equal to) Tat (Ishvara). Asi means "are equal to, when you remove the upaadhi". If we apply this meaning, the mahaa vaakya reads : Tvam (You) Asi (are equal to) Tat (Ishvara) when you remove both the upaadhis of You and Ishvara. I as a human have the upaadhi of the physical body and everything it contains. Ishvara has the upaadhi of the entire universe in its visible form including all the trees, plants, animals, people, stars, planets etc that we see with our senses. If we mentally remove our body as an upaadhi, and we also mentally remove the visible universe as an upaadhi, we are left with the same eternal essence in both cases. That same eternal essence, that same kshetragnya, is present in all kshetras, which are the same as upaadhis.

Another meaning of the word "upaadhi" is title or qualification, which can help us understand this shloka in a different way. Let's say there are two brothers in a house. One of them has a PhD in physics, and the other is a manager in a multinational. When each of them is in their respective offices, they use their titles as part of their job responsibilities. But when they perform a pooja or a holy ritual, lets say, they mentally remove their upaadhis or titles. If they did not remove their titles, their conversation would go like this: "Hey PhD in physics, do this. Hey manager, pour the clarified butter". They would never see that they are really the same family under the titles that seemingly create differences. This means that removing upaadhis to realize our oneness with Ishvara can be difficult, but it is not impossible. We know how to remove small upaadhis. Shri Krishna will teach us how to remove the biggest upaadhis in this chapter through practical techniques. He says that ultimately, knowledge of the kshetragnya, the kshetras or upaadhis, and how to realize oneness under the kshetras, is the ultimate knowledge that one has to learn, and not any other type of knowledge.

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"tat kṣetraṁ yac ca yādṛk ca,
yad-vikāri yataś ca yat..□
sa ca yo yat- prabhāvaś ca,
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Meaning:

And what is that field, and of what is its nature, and what are its modifications, and from where it was born; and who is he and what are his powers, listen from me in brief.

Explanation:

Since we covered a lot of ground in the prior two shlokas, let us do a quick recap. Shri Krishna said that there is only one kind of knowledge that has to be known by a seeker: that there are several bodies or conditionings called fields, and there is just one knower of the field that is as though limited by these bodies due to ignorance or avidyaa. Since there is a lot more to be said about this subject, Shri Krishna lists all the relevant topics that he has to cover.

Now, a comprehensive list of what includes the nature of Kṣetraṁ is to be studied. What all are included is the nature of Kṣetraṁ, the objective universe, Kṣetraṁ and as different from the subjective experiencer.

Second topic yadvikāri means what are the causes out of which various effects are born. So the details regarding the causes, Kāraṇam. what are the effects born out of various causes? It refers to Kāraṇam and refers to kāryam. One refers to the cause and the other to the effect. The idea is the whole objective universe consists of cause- effect chain only.

With regards to the kshetra, the field, we have to learn about what it is, what are its characteristics, how does it undergo modifications and what it its source. With regards to the knower of the field, the kshetragnya, we have to also learn what it is, what are its powers and what are its effects. This is the theoretical aspect of this chapter. All this will be covered in just a few shlokas, or “in brief” from Shri Krishna’s standpoint, but we will study it elaborately.

Another topic that will be covered in this chapter is the comparison between the individual and the world, how does the individual come in contact with the world, how does he transact with the world, and what are the means of knowledge he can use to maintain the awareness of the field and its knower throughout his life. This is an extremely practical and useful aspect of this chapter.

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Meaning:

Sages have sung (about the field and its knower) in many ways, it has been stated in various Vedic chants and also in the logical and conclusive texts of the Brahma Sootras.

Explanation:

Shri Krishna glorifies the knowledge of the field and its knower in this shloka.

This topic of kṣētra and kṣētrajña is so important is that all the sciptural texts have talked about this because kṣētra includes the entire material universe; kṣētrajña is consciousness; the whole creation is a mixture of spirit and matter only. Therefore, if you have really understood what matter is, the inert principle, and if you have really understood what is the spirit, the conscious principle, you have understood the whole creation. In fact, all the

scientists claim that they are working for the theory of everything. They call it TOE, and what is TOE, theory of everything, they want to come to one theory which will explain every phenomenon in the creation. Still this theory is eluding the scientists. Vēdānta has given the theory of everything. What is that? Everything is nothing but consciousness plus matter. Therefore, scriptures deal only with these two topics.

Therefore, all the vēdās have talked about it only; how? distinctly pṛthak, that pṛthak is important because science has not been able to understand the relationship between matter and consciousness. So whether consciousness is distinct from matter; is it identical with matter; is it part of the matter; is it a temporary phenomenon, epiphenomena; epi means temporary, of matter, still consciousness- matter-relationship is a mystery for all branches of science. In fact, the mystery is so deep, that the even do not know in which branch of science it would come. Whether it should become part of psychology or neurology or this or that, they do not know; whereas Vēdānta has distinguished matter and consciousness and they have distinctly talked about this; pṛthak means what? Distinctly.

What is this distinction? Consciousness satyam; matter mithya and I am (this is important) consciousness satyam; consciousness is the reality; matter is mithya, the unreal principle, and who am I, I am the consciousness principle, this has been talked about in the vēdās.

Shree Krishna affirms that this very same knowledge was first revealed to the rishis or sages and is not something that has been invented in the Gita. It was then documented in the four Vedas: the Rik, Saama, Yajur and Atharva. It is to be found in all three sections of each of these Vedas: The Samhitaa (hymns), Braahmanaa (theology) and Upanishads (discourses on divine knowledge). It is important to note that this knowledge was revealed to the sages in their meditations, and not authored as an original composition by anybody. Since this knowledge is beyond the realm of the senses and the mind, it could not have come from any one person's mind. It had to come from direct experience arrived at through meditation.

Now, even if we are able to access this divine knowledge by studying the Vedas, we cannot assimilate this knowledge without the help of logic. We need something that can explain, step-by-step, what is revealed in the four Vedas. We also need logic to reconcile apparent contradictions that we as students come across while studying the Vedas. The Brahma Sootras, authored by Vyaasa, use logic and reason to present the knowledge of the Vedas in a precise, formula-like method. Each sootra in that text is hardly two or three words long but is packed with so much information that commentators like Shankaraachaarya write pages and pages to explain just one sootra.

The Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads and the Brahma Sootras are known as the "Prasthaana Traya", and together provide a comprehensive compendium of knowledge about the field and its knower, as well as practical training on how to go about it. Of the three, the Bhagavad Gita is closest to the understanding of a common man. Shri Krishna instructs us to learn about the field and the knower in brief such that we can progress in our spiritual

journey. But if we want to delve deeper into the details for academic reasons, we are more than welcome to read the Vedas and the Brahma Sootras.

anantaśāstra bahuvēditavyam

alpasya kālā bhahavasca vighnāḥ yat sārabhūtam tat upasitavyam hamsō yatā kṣīramivāṁbhu misrāt ||

There are many shastras (bodies of knowledge/doctrines) and abundance of knowledge. But we have limited time and a lot of obstacles. As a swan extracts milk from a mixture of milk and water, one should study the essence of the shastras (rather than studying each and every shastra to great details).

He now proceeds to talk about the field, the kshetra, in detail.

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□□ **Detail explanation of shlok 13.05, as given by Swami Mukundananda, in his book " Bhagvad Gita - The Song of God"**□□

Knowledge is appealing to the intellect when it is expressed with precision and clarity, and is substantiated with sound logic. Further, for it to be accepted as infallible, it must be confirmed on the basis of infallible authority. The reference for validating spiritual knowledge is the Vedas.

Vedas: These are not just the name of some books; they are the eternal knowledge of God. Whenever God creates the world, He manifests the Vedas for the benefit of the souls. The Bṛihadāraṇyak Upaniṣhad (4.5.11) states: niḥśhvasitamasya vedāḥ "The Vedas manifested from the breath of God." They were first revealed in the heart of the first-born Brahma. From there, they came down through the oral tradition, and hence, another name for them is Śhruti, or "knowledge received through the ear." At the beginning of the age of Kali, Ved Vyas, who was himself a descension of God, put down the Vedas in the form of a book, and divided the one body of knowledge into four portions—Ṛig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sāma Veda, and Atharva Veda. Hence, he got the name Ved Vyās, or "one who divided the Vedas." The distinction must be borne in mind that Ved Vyas is never referred to as the composer of the Vedas but merely the one who divided them. Hence, the Vedas are also called apauruṣheya, which means "not created by any person." They are respected as the infallible authority for spiritual knowledge.

bhūtaṁ bhavyaṁ bhaviṣhyaṁ cha sarvaṁ vedāt prasidhyati (Manu Smṛiti 12.97)

"Any spiritual principle must be validated on the authority of the Vedas." To elaborate this knowledge of the Vedas, many sages wrote texts and these traditionally became included in the gamut of the Vedic scriptures because they conform to the authority of the Vedas. Some of the important Vedic scriptures are listed below.

Itihās: These are historical texts, and are two in number, the Ramayan and the Mahabharat. They describe the history related to two important descensions of God. The Ramayan was written by Sage Valmiki, and describes the Leelas, or divine Pastimes, of Lord Ram. Amazingly, it was written by Valmiki before Shree Ram actually displayed His Leelas. The great poet Sage was empowered with divine vision, by which he could see the Pastimes Lord

Ram would enact on descending in the world. He thus put them down in 24,000 most beautifully composed Sanskrit verses of the Ramayan. These verses also contain lessons on ideal behavior in various social roles, such as son, brother, wife, king, and married couples. The Ramayan has also been written in many regional languages of India, thereby increasing its popularity amongst the people. The most famous amongst these is the Hindi Ramayan, Ramcharit Manas, written by a great devotee of Lord Ram, Saint Tulsidas.

The Mahabharat was written by Sage Ved Vyas. It contains 100,000 verses and is considered the longest poem in the world. The divine Leelas of Lord Krishna are the central theme of the Mahabharat. It is full of wisdom and guidance related to duties in all stages of human life, and devotion to God. The Bhagavad Gita is a portion of the Mahabharat. It is the most popular Hindu scripture, since it contains the essence of spiritual knowledge, so beautifully described by Lord Krishna Himself. It has been translated in many different languages of the world. Innumerable commentaries have been written on the Bhagavad Gita.

Puranas: There are eighteen Puranas, written by Sage Ved Vyas. Together, they contain 400,000 verses. These describe the divine Pastimes of the various forms of God and His devotees. The Puranas are also full of philosophic knowledge. They discuss the creation of the universe, its annihilation and recreation, the history of humankind, the genealogy of the celestial gods and the holy sages. The most important amongst them is the Bhāgavat Purāṇ, or the Shreemad Bhagavatam. It was the last scripture written by Sage Ved Vyas. In it, he mentions that in this scripture, he is going to reveal the highest dharma of pure selfless love for God. Philosophically, the Shreemad Bhagavatam begins where the Bhagavad Gita ends.

Ṣhaḍ-darśhan: These come next in importance amongst the Vedic scriptures. Six sages wrote six scriptures highlighting particular aspects of Hindu philosophy. These became known as the Ṣhaḍ-darśhan, or six philosophic works. They are:

1. Mīmānsā: Written by Maharishi (Sage) Jaimini, it describes ritualistic duties and ceremonies.

2. Vedānt Darśhan: Written by Maharishi Ved Vyas, it discusses the nature of the Absolute Truth.

3. Nyāya Darśhan: Written by Maharishi Gautam, it develops a system of logic for understanding life and the Absolute Truth.

4. Vaiśheṣhik Darśhan: Written by Maharishi Kanad, it analyses cosmology and creation from the perspective of its various elements.

5. Yog Darśhan: Written by Maharishi Patañjali, it describes an eightfold path to union with God, beginning with physical postures.

6. Sānkhya Darśhan: Written by Maharishi Kapil, it describes the evolution of the Universe from prakṛiti, the primordial form of the material energy.

Apart from these mentioned above, there are hundreds of other scriptures in the Hindu tradition. It would be impossible to describe them all here. Let it suffice to say that the Vedic scriptures are a vast treasure house of divine knowledge revealed by God and the saints for the eternal welfare of all humankind.

Amongst these scriptural texts, the Brahma Sūtra (Vedānt Darśhan) is considered as the last word on the topic of the distinction between the soul, the material body, and God. Hence, Shree Krishna particularly mentions it in the above verse. "Ved" refers to the Vedas, and "ant" means "the conclusion." Consequently, "Vedānt" means "the conclusion of Vedic knowledge." Although, the Vedānt Darśhan was written by Sage Ved Vyas, many great scholars accepted it as the reference authority for philosophical dissertation and wrote commentaries on it to establish their unique philosophic viewpoint regarding the soul and God. Jagadguru Shankaracharya's commentary on the Vedānt Darśhan is called Śhārīrak Bhāṣhya, which lays the foundation for the advait-vād tradition of philosophy. Many of his followers, such as Vachaspati and Padmapada have elaborated upon his commentary. Jagadguru Nimbarkarcharya wrote the Vedānt Pārijāta Saurabh, which explains the dwait-advait-vād school of thought. Jagadguru Ramanujacharya's commentary is called Śhrī Bhāṣhya, which lays the basis for the viśhiṣhṭ-advait-vād system of philosophy. Jagadguru Madhvacharya's commentary is called Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣhyam, which is the foundation for the dwait-vād school of thought. Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya wrote Aṇu Bhāṣhya, in which he established the śhuddhadvait-vād system of philosophy. Apart from these, some of the other well-known commentators have been Bhat Bhaskar, Yadav Prakash, Keshav, Nilakanth, Vijnanabhikshu, and Baladev Vidyabhushan.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, himself a Vedic scholar par excellence, did not write any commentary on the Vedānt Darśhan. He took the view that the writer of the Vedānt, Sage Ved Vyas himself, declared that his final scripture the Shreemad Bhagavatam is its perfect commentary:

arthoyaṁ brahmasūtrāṇaṁ sarvopaniṣhadāmapi

"The Shreemad Bhagavatam reveals the meaning and the essence of the Vedānt Darśhan and all the Upanishads." Hence, out of respect for Ved Vyas, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu did not deem it fit to write another commentary on the scripture.

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Meaning:

The great elements, the ego, the intellect, the unmanifest, and also the ten senses, and the one, and five objects of senses.

Desire, hatred, joy, sorrow, assembly, awareness, fortitude. This field with its modifications has been illustrated in brief.

Explanation:

In our tradition, all the philosophers have analysed the objective universe and categorised them into various divisions. In Sanskrit they are called tatvāni. Tatvā means category and therefore all the philosophers, we have got mainly 12 branches of philosophy in Our tradition; all of them try to categorise the universe into various tatvāms; **Vaiṣēṣika** philosophy, has divided the whole creation into seven tatvās. **Nyaya** philosophy has divided into 16 tatvās. **Sāṅkya** philosophy has divided the whole objective universe into twenty- four tatvās.

And here Vyāsācārya temporarily borrows from Sāṅkya philosophy and he categories the universe into 24 tatvāms or catagories.

The first basic matter principle they call Prakṛti means nature. During pralaya destruction, before the evolution of the universe, before the emergence of the universe, it was in potential form, that potential form of the universe they call Prakṛtiḥ. If you want to understand in scientific language, the condition just before the Big Bang. The condition before Big Bang. Then they say, the Prakṛti evolves partially and the first stage of evolution they call mahat tatvām.

Prakṛti, then mahat; so Mahat is also total matter in the first stage of evolution. Then buddhiḥ intellect means the mahat tatvām, the second stage; **buddhiḥ careful note, not the individual intellect, but buddhiḥ is the cosmic intellect**, the mahat tatvām, the second stage; Then ahamkāra, is the cosmic ego the third stage; avyaktham, buddhiḥ, ahamkāraḥ, (three) And then from ahamkara.

And the other 16 items; what are they? Mahābhūtāni. mahābhūtāni means the 5 subtle elements: ākāśa, vāyu, agni, āpaḥ, pritvi; i.e.space, air, fire, water and earth; in their subtle form; subtle form means invisible form. In Tatvā bodha we have dealt with this. And then indriyāṇi means the ten sense organs: daśa indriyāṇi. Krishna himself says: daśa indriyāṇi, mahābhūtāni, how much 15, ekam means the mind, manaḥ tatvām, the cosmic mind; so mahābhūtāni, daśa indriyāṇi, ēkam, these are the 16 tatvās at the third stage. And then comes the fourth stage; pañca cēndriyagōcarāḥ, indriya gōcarāḥ means the stule bhutani; the five gross elements; thus 1+1+1+16+5; this is the addition; If you add it will be 24 tatvams; all of them, come under Kṣetraṁ.

And not only that. These 24 tatvams do not remain changeless, they constantly undergo change and as a result of their change and interaction, various properties are generated. And they are called the various guṇās or vikāras of the Kṣetraṁ; and what are the generated properties? Krishna enumerates them in the next slōkā 7. This is the explanation of the yadvikāri yataśca yat. In the fourth verse, Krishna had promised yadvikāri yataśca yat; what are the various products of the Kṣetraṁ I will tell; now he gives the product and what are they:

Now look at the slōkā. saṅghātaḥ cētanā cētanā. Saṅghātaḥ means what, the body mind complex is called saṅghātaḥ, and cētanā means borrowed sentiency. Like the kṣētrajña is like the Sun; mind is like the mirror and borrowed consciousness is like the reflected Sun. And in Vēdānta it is called cidabhāsa; or cit prathibhiṁba or prathibhiṁba caitanyam.

Wherever the reflecting medium is present And reflecting medium is Kṣetraṁ, and therefore the reflection also must be part of Kṣetraṁ only. Very careful, original consciousness is not part of Kṣetraṁ; but the reflected consciousness becomes part of the Kṣetraṁ; means the material universe. And therefore, Krishna says saṅghātaḥ, the body- mind- complex, chetana, the borrowed consciousness, therefore the mind has become a live mind, and therefore the mind is able to experience the world and moment the mind becomes a live mind, capable of experiencing the world, the job of the mind is to categorise.

It has started. icchā means rāga, I develop attachment towards a segment of the universe. And not only rāgaḥ, but the other side of the coin is also what; dvēṣaḥ means haterate. Bhagavan has created only a neutral world, but I cover the world with my coloration; and I always see a colored world, world like a person wearing a colour glass and he says that everything is dark. Similarly, rāgaḥ and dvēṣaḥ are the colored glasses born by the mind; and it always lives in its own private world. then what is the next consequence? Sukham, duḥkham; happiness or misery the desirable world produces sukhaṃ duḥkhaṃ. The undesirable world also produces sukhaṃ and this capacity of the world is not intrinsic. The world has no capacity to give joy or sorrow. But when I classify the world as favourable and unfavourable; world gains the capacity.

Thus, the whole world is a padārthaḥ, but I convert the padārthaḥ world into a Viṣayaḥ; Viṣayaḥ is derived from the root, vi + ṣi; si root 5th conjugation parasmai pada, sinothi sinutha, sinvanthi, iti rupāni, vi is the prefix, vi sinothi iti Viṣayaḥ; That which binds you is called Viṣayaḥ. What do we do? we convert the whole world of Kṣetraṁ into a Viṣayaḥ by developing rāgaḥ and dvēṣaḥ and making the world capable of giving sukhaṃ and duḥkhaṃ.

Then dhṛtiḥ; dhṛtiḥ means will power. Because once we have classified the world as the cause of sorrow and happiness, then you use your will power to acquire the so-called object of joy, which is called pravṛthi

Desire, hatred, joy and sorrow are modifications or changes in the inner instrument, the antahakarana. The antahakarana always wants to create a sense of wholeness or completeness out of the diversity of limbs, hair, nerves, nails etc that make up one body. But it also wants to keep this collection of what it calls the body distinct from everything else in the world. This notion of completeness is called “sanghaata” meaning assembly, and the will to preserve the assembly and keep it distinct from the world is called “dhriti” or fortitude. All biological desires arise from this desire to maintain the body as a distinct single entity.

Now we come to the modification of the antahakarana that gives it the quality of awareness and sentiency, known as “chetanaa” or awareness. Though we may be tempted to think that this sentiency in the antahakarana is the soul, the aatmaa, the eternal essence, it is not. It is a borrowed kind of awareness caused by a reflection of the eternal essence in the antahakarana, just like a pot filled with water reflects the sun in it. In fact, chetanaa and the six other modifications mentioned in this shloka are variously assumed to be the eternal essence by various schools of philosophy. Shri Krishna asserts that everything mentioned in this shloka and the prior shloka is not the eternal essence. It is kshetra, the field.

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ahiṁsā kṣāntir ārjavam..□
ācāryopāsanaṁ śaucaṁ,
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Meaning:

Humility, unpretentiousness, non-injury, forgiveness, straightforwardness, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control.

Explanation:

Let us do a quick recap. Shri Krishna began this chapter with a brief explanation of what is the field or kshetra, and who is its knower or kshetragnya. He then asserted that there is only one knower of all the fields in the universe. After that, he categorized twenty-four items that can be each considered as a field. From this shloka, Shri Krishna changes the topic from theoretical description to extremely practical techniques that help us bring this teaching into our daily lives. These techniques train us to spot the field or upaadhi that we are giving importance and subsequently reduce the level of importance we give to it. The less importance we give to any of these twenty-four upaadhis, the closer we are to realizing our oneness with the eternal essence that is beyond any field or upaadhi.

Shri Krishna promised discussion on kṣētrajña and accordingly in verse 6 and 7, Krishna has elaborated Kṣetraṁ, but He seems to have forgotten to elaborate kṣētrajña and started with qualities one gyani must have within hinself. Thus, Krishna has not kept up his promise or forgets. There is nothing wrong in our forgetting but a very surprising if it is forgotten by Lord Krishna. So, we must understand that Krishna is not an ordinary teacher and that He would not make a promise and not teach; kṣētrajña is identical with jñēya and Puruṣaḥ. Kṣētrajña, Jñēyaṁ and Puruṣaḥ all the three are identical, all the three represent this spirit consciousness principle. Even they are identical, Arjuna does not know this fact, and therefore he separately asked for the explanation of each one. Like some people saying, I would like to learn Vēdānta and Upaniṣads. If anybody says I want to learn Vēdānta and Upaniṣad, both are same to get knowledge.

What is the meaning of Jñānam? In this chapter, in this verse, Krishna takes Jñānam with a special meaning. Normally, Jñānam means knowledge; Any knowledge is Jñānam and in the context of philosophy, Jñānam means spiritual knowledge. So generally Jñānam means any knowledge and in the context of philosophy or vēdānta, it means atma Jñānam or brahma Jñānam, spiritual knowledge; but in this particular context, Jñānam has got still different meaning, and that is all the values of life are all the virtues of a person is called sadguṇāḥ is called Jñānam. Guṇaḥ means virtues.

And in an unprepared uncultivated unfit mind, if spiritual knowledge is injected by the Guru is imparted by the mind, the unprepared mind will resist the knowledge; it will not receive the knowledge even if it receives the knowledge, it will not be assimilated. And unassimilated Vēdānta or for that any śāstra, unassimilated is like poision, like the

undigested food. Food is nourishing when it is digested; but if it remains undigested it is a poison.

Dayananda swami gives a beautiful example, if you want to know. Suppose there is an old tree; puliyamaram or veppa maram; and you see the trunk, it has got a very very rugged surface; very very rough and rugged surface. And suppose you go and remove your dress, shirt, banian and all, and rub against the trunk of the puliyamaram, the tamarind or neem tree. When you rub against the tree, what happens to the tree; nothing. On the other hand, depending upon the intensity of the rubbing, you are hurt; when I rub against a tree; I am rubbing myself; I am injuring myself; gyaan, the universal law, is like puliyamaram; any time I rub against universal law, or violate a universal law, nothing happens to the law, I am hurting myself. And therefore, without preparation, knowledge is following the universal law. This is one significance.

"Maana" means overestimation of one's own self-worth. This self-worth can be derived from health, wealth, power, beauty, control, position, any of these characteristics. Acknowledgement that we have one or more of these characteristics, a correct assessment of these characteristics is fine, but when pride or "abhimaan" derived from these characteristics makes us crave extra attention or put down someone else, it is to be avoided. "Amaanitvam" is an absence of pride about any of the above-mentioned characteristics. "Dambha" means pretentiousness or falsehood. In the case of abhimaana, we had some characteristic in us that made us puff up with pride. In dambha, we derive a false sense of pride where there is no positive trait to speak of whatsoever. It is completely hollow pride. We see examples in bollywood movies where the boy will rent or steal a fancy car in order to impress his girlfriend. If we have this trait in us, very few people will trust us to do any task well. It is easy to see through people who have dambha. So then, "adambhitvam" is utter absence of pretentiousness.

"Himsaa" means injury in a very broad sense of the word. There are five afflictions that are mentioned in the Yoga school of philosophy: ignorance, arrogance, desire, hatred and fear of death. Whenever we cause any of these afflictions or kleshas in any other person, we are injuring that person. When we do not cause any of these afflications, we demonstrate ahimsaa or non-injury. "Kshaantihi" is an attitude of forgiveness that comes out of extreme titkshaa which is forbearance and tolerance. If we do not have this quality, we will get angry, flare up and lose our equanimity at every little jab or insult that anyone throws at us. In the second chapter Shri Krishna had emphasized the quality of forbearance as a means to achieve equanimity as well. The attitude of forgiveness developed through forbearance is similar to that of a mother who forgives any mistake committed by her child.

"Aarjavam" refers to straightforwardness, an absence of crookedness in dealing with the world. It is derived from the root "riju" which is the root of the word "Arjuna" as well. This quality is reflected in us when our thoughts are aligned with our actions. Even children can see through someone who says one thing and does something else. "Aacharya" refers to

someone who collects the essence of the scriptures, like a honeybee collects nectar from flowers. Giving respect to such a learned master is called "aacharya upaasanam". By doing so, we acknowledge that we do not know everything, and that we are ready to follow the path laid out by the teacher, no matter how much it hurts our ego.

"Shaucham" is purity of the body and the mind. The ritual of pooja is emphasized in Indian children because in that short period of time, we learn to maintain a high degree of external purity. If we reflect on this as we get older, that notion of external purity slowly seeps into our mind and encourages us to develop purity in thought as well. "Sthairyam" is the strength to remain firm in one's convictions, to remain steadfast in what we do. If we decide to meditate for ten minutes daily but cannot even do so for a couple of days, we will not be able to tackle much more challenging aspects of our material and spiritual journeys. "Aatmaa vinigraha" is our ability to control our mind from its natural tendency to run after sense objects. The sense organs, which are under the control of the mind, have a natural tendency to go outwards. Through self-control, we learn to turn them inward.

Shri Krishna covered nine qualities in tihs shloka. There are eleven more that are covered in the next few shlokas.

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and that is how the tug-of-war begins; intellect decide I want to get out of the habit and even I give up the habit for a few days and thereafter again he gets addicted. Mark Twain or somebody said: Who said giving up smoking is difficult? I have given up many times. Then begins the big tug of war or the intellect says that I am a Gītā student, and I should be a master, I should not be a weakling, and its takes wonderful decision, a few days they are implemented, and again gets to the old rut. Called relapse.

We have five sense organs that can contact the world and perceive objects. They have raaga (attraction), dvesha (hatred) or viraaga (indifference) towards objects. If we see a lump of clay, for example, we have neither attraction nor hatred towards it. The mind is not disturbed when the senses remain free of the labelling of raaga or dvesha. When our senses develop indifference towards every object that they perceive, it is the state of vairagyam or dispassion towards sense objects. So, regardless of whether the object in question is in front of us or someone reminds us of that object, our mind remains unaffected by its presence.

Previously, we came across the term "abhimaan" which meant a sense of mine-ness towards external attributes such as wealth, power, position and so on. "Ahankaara" in this context is a stronger form of abhimaan where we develop a sense of mine-ness towards our own body, mind, and intellect. If one has pride about a gold medal in mathematics, that is abhimaaan. But if one is proud about one's intelligence, that is ahankaara. Anahankaara is the absence of such pride, and it is born out of constant dispassion or vairagya towards the body and its temporary nature. Moreover, even a simple bit of contemplation will reveal that for most of the population, there is always someone who will eventually overtake us with a better body, mind and intellect.

So far, we came across pleasure derived out of sense objects, as well as pride in the functioning of the body, mind and intellect. Both these notions stem from the assumption that our body will remain healthy and fit eternally. But, even if we walk the corridor of any hospital for five minutes, we see the silliness in holding on to that assumption. "Dosha-anudarshanam" is the constant, repeated perception of sorrow in all of these states of the body, not just when we visit the hospital. Now, although we consider disease, old age and death as sorrowful, Shri Krishna adds birth to this list as well. It is full of suffering for both the child and the mother. In the Dasbodh of Swami Ramdas, as well as the Shiva Apraadha Stotram of Shankaraachaarya, there is an elaborate description of the painful process of birth.

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A myth is a well- known story which was made up in the past to explain natural events or to justify religious beliefs or social customs.

There is a famous Greek myth in which Icarus flew too near to the Sun.

If you describe a belief or explanation as a myth, you mean that many people believe it but it is actually untrue.

Contrary to the popular myth, women are not reckless spendthrifts.

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A traditional story accepted as history; serves to explain the world view of a people

Myth is a folklore genre consisting of narratives that play a fundamental role in a society, such as foundational tales or origin myths. Since the term myth is widely used to imply that a story is not objectively true, the identification of a narrative as a myth can be highly controversial: many adherents of religions view their own religion's stories as true, and therefore object to those stories being characterized as myths, while seeing the stories of other religions as being myth. As such, some scholars label all religious narratives as myths for practical reasons, such as to avoid depreciating any one tradition because cultures interpret each other differently relative to one another. Other scholars avoid using the term "myth" altogether and instead utilize different terms like "sacred history", "holy story", or simply "history" to avoid placing pejorative overtones on any sacred narrative.

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Meaning:

Remaining unattached, without identification with one's son, spouse, home and others, and constant equanimity of mind when favourable or unfavourable (situations) are attained.

Explanation:

Shri Krishna adds three more qualities that help us reduce importance of the kshetra in this shloka. The first one is anasaktihi, a detached attitude towards people, objects and situations. Aasakti is extreme attachment whereas anasaktihi is lack of attachment. Only when we are away from our daily routine, perhaps on vacation or on a retreat, do we know our level of dependence, and even addiction, to objects, people and situations. Beginning from a cup of coffee in the morning to television in the evening, we rely on external factors to give us joy, and conversely, experience sorrow when they are not available for our enjoyment.

Previously we talked about indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam. Now we are talking about anasaktiḥ. Both mean detachments only but the difference is previously it is detachment from the standpoint of sense organs; it was indriya nigrahaḥ; here anasaktiḥ deals with manō

nigrahaḥ. So previous one is damaḥ; the present one is śamaḥ. And why does Krishna talk about both of them?

So initially you start from sense control; and even after sense control; mind continues to have a vāsana and therefore we have to handle the mind also. And for that the mind has to be educated of the evils involved in the addiction and once the mind is mastered; thereafter, even if the object of addiction is in front. I have got out of habit of smoking or drinking. If the other person is using that right in front; I can remain there without having a temptation. So that is the higher stage of detachment born out of viveka śaktiḥ. And only when I say NO out of discrimination; it becomes transcending. If I stop them because of the others' pressure, it becomes suppression only. Therefore, suppression should be converted to transcendence. And that transcendence is inner detachment. After inner detachment, I am not worried about temptation. I move anywhere.

A particularly difficult type of attachment is the strong identification we have with our immediate family and home, which is why Shri Krishna has specifically called it out in this shloka. "Abhishvangaha" is the placement of our future comfort, joy and happiness in our spouse, our children and our home. It is the thought that "in my old age, I do not have to worry, my spouse, or my child will take care of everything, and I can retire in my house peacefully". This kind of identification is one step worse than attachment, because we do not see any difference between us and our spouse, our children and our home. Any sorrow that affects our spouse becomes our own sorrow. We should of course partake in joy and sorrow with our family members, but only to the extent of our responsibilities. If we go overboard, we will not be able to negate this aspect of kshetra, and consequently, not be able to contemplate the eternal essence. "Anabhishvangaha" is one who can remain detached in this situation.

The third quality mentioned here is "samachittatvam", maintaining equanity of mind in favourable or unfavourable situations. Shri Krishna has stressed this qualiti repeatedly in various contexts. Even in the very beginning, in the second chapter, he praised equanimity by saying "samatvam yoga ucchyate". Now, he urges us to maintain this attitude at all times. Even- mindedness amidst desired and undesired events in life. Pleasurable and painful events come without invitation, just as the night and the day. That is life. To rise above these dualities, we must learn to enhance our spiritual strength through detachment toward the world. We must develop the ability to remain unperturbed by life’s reversals and also not get carried away with the euphoria of success. This can only work if we figure out how to prevent our mind from labelling situations as favourable or unfavourable. One way of doing so is to submit all the results of actions to Ishvara as an offering and accept any situation as a blessing from him. We can also train our mind through intense meditation to stop this sort of labelling.

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Meaning:

Single-pointed devotion in me through unwavering yoga, going to solitary locations and disinterest in the assembly of people.

Explanation:

Shri Krishna adds three further attributes that help us reduce the impact of the field or the kshetra. He stresses upon the importance of single- pointed devotion by bringing up the word “vyabhichaari”. At one level it means wavering or unsteady, but at another level it refers to someone who is unfaithful to their spouse. True devotion to Ishvara has to be

“avyabhichaari” or unwavering, where there is no “anya”, no other goal such as getting good marks in our exams, or generating extra profit in our business. We only ask such material goals when we doubt the omniscience, the all-knowing nature of Ishvara.

“Vivikta desha” refers to a location that is pure and conducive to meditation and contemplation. But this does not suggest retiring to a forest. It means finding a time and place every day where we can be free of distractions such as cell phones, television and Internet. If we are constantly pulled into the world by such distractions, contemplation upon Ishvara becomes impossible. But if we spend ten to fifteen minutes without any distractions, and make it a habit, we will automatically begin the process of quietening our mind and contemplating upon Ishvara.

“Jana samsad” means assembly of people. And we all know that wherever two or three people meet without any agenda, there is going to be discussion about all the goings on in the world, or even gossip. This assembly of people forces one to join in the conversation and again get sucked into praakrita or material interests. Now “ratihi” means one who revels. So therefore, one who prefers not to indulge in such gossip is called “janasamsadi aratihi”. In fact, as our devotion towards Ishvara increases, interest for external stimuli, including meeting constantly, will slowly subside.

Shri Krishna adds two more attributes in the next shloka to conclude this topic.

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Meaning:

Steadfastness in the knowledge of the self, contemplation on the goal of the knowledge of reality. This has been spoken of as knowledge. That which is other than this is ignorance.

Explanation:

Shri Krishna adds two final entries to the list of twenty attributes that help us reduce the importance we give to the kshetra or the field. “Adhyaatma” refers to the self, the “I” in us. “Jnyaanam” is knowledge, and “nityatvam” is constant dwelling in that knowledge. For instance, once we know that the sun is a star and that the earth revolves around it, we never forget it, even when we appreciate the beauty of a sunrise or a sunset. Similarly, we can mourn the loss of a loved one, without letting that incident obscure our knowledge that the human body is ephemeral.

Aversion for mundane society. The sign of a materialistic mind is that it finds pleasure in talks about worldly people and worldly affairs. One who is cultivating divine consciousness develops a natural distaste for these activities, and thus avoids mundane society. At the same time, if it is necessary to participate in it for the sake of service to God, the devotee accepts it and develops the strength to remain mentally unaffected by it.

Philosophical pursuit of the Absolute Truth. Even animals engage in the bodily activities of eating, sleeping, mating, and defending. However, God has especially blessed the human form with the faculty of knowledge. This is not to enable us to engage in bodily activities in a deluxe way, but for us to contemplate upon the questions: “Who am I? Why am I here? What is my goal in life? How was this world created? What is my connection with the Creator? How will I fulfill my purpose in life?” This philosophic pursuit of the truth sublimates our thinking above the animalistic level and brings us to hear and read about the divine science of God-realization.

All the virtues, habits, behaviors, and attitudes described above lead to the growth of wisdom and knowledge. The opposite of these is vanity, hypocrisy, violence, vengeance, duplicity, disrespect for the Guru, uncleanliness of body and mind, unsteadiness, lack of self-control, longing for sense objects, conceit, entanglement in spouse, children, home, etc. Such dispositions cripple the development self-knowledge. Thus, Shree Krishna calls them ignorance and darkness.

Then the next virtue; in the first line in the second word, tattvajñānārthadarśanam. All these virtues or values are prescribed for the sake of Jñāna yōgyatha prāpthi. And by gaining the eligibility for knowledge, what do you accomplish at the end? Jñānam itself. And if I have to have a value for Jñāna yōgyatha, then I should have a value for Jñānam. When I will value the examination of GMAT, TOFEL, etc. I value all those examinations when I value benefit or the result of those examinations. I want to join an American university. The more value I Plhave with regard to the end, then I will have the value for the means.

“Tattva jnyaana artha” is the goal or the culmination of the knowledge of reality, which is moksha or liberation. We will constantly contemplate on the self only if we feel that liberation is worthwhile, that it is valuable. On the other hand, if we value material goals more than liberation, we will waver in our commitment to inquiring about the self. Therefore, if we are able to make liberation our end goal, we will easily practice all the other attributes that we have studied in the previous few shlokas.

Jñānam gives inner freedom; And then comes the final and most important virtue that is adhyātma Jñāna nithyatvam. So systematic and consistent study of vēdāntic scriptures for a length of time, under the guidance of a competent ācārya. e.g. if you arrange bricks one after the other, well cemented together, then out of heap of bricks, you get a wonderful room in which you can live. So, in both conditions’ bricks are there; one is well arranged and the other is heap.

Shri Krishna concludes this topic by asserting that what has been spoken of so far is the means of knowledge, it is jnyaanam. Anything that does not provide this means of knowledge is ignorance, it is ajnyaanam, it will only serve to further entangle us in the material world. For instance, if we practice arrogance instead of humility, that is out of ignorance. It will lead us away from the path of liberation. We are urged to lead an intelligent, ignorance- free life in the Gita, right from the beginning when Shri Krishna glorified buddhi yoga in the second chapter.

So then, if all this was the means of knowledge, what knowledge does it reveal to us? This topic is taken up next.

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yaj jñātvāmṛtam aśnute..□
anādi mat- paraṁ brahma,
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Meaning:

I will describe that which is to be known, by realizing which, immortality is attained. The supreme brahman is without beginning, said to be neither manifest nor unmanifest.

Explanation:

In the beginning of this chapter, Shri Krishna set out to explain what is kshetra or the field, and what is kshetrajnya or the knower of the field. He then set to list out various aspects of the field, which are also known as upaadhis or conditionings. This list included upaadhis such as the intellect, the mind, the five elements and so on. Shri Krishna also asserted there is only one knower of the field that is limited or conditioned by all of these upaadhis. He then gave us twenty attributes that we should cultivate in order to reduce the importance we give to these upaadhis, so that we can slowly uncover and get to the kshetrajnya, the knower of the field.

After assuming that we have cultivated these twenty qualities, and consequently learned how to reduce the importance of the field in our lives, Shri Krishna now gets to the main topic of this chapter. Out of 6 topics, Shri Krishna has cleared three Kṣetraṁ, kṣētrajña and Jñānam. Now in remaing three topics Jñēyam; prakṛ̥ti and puruṣaḥ, he is explaning Jneyem (□□□□□) in verses 13 to 19. Krishna says that this subject matter, everybody has to necessarily know Because this is the one which solves the fundamental problem of every human being and which every human being is struggling to solve.

Fundamental problem is the fear of mortality is there all the time, right from birth itself i.e. the sense of insecurity. Every single person wants freedom from mortality and the fear of it. Therefore, Krishna says yat jñātva, knowing which alone, one attains immortality, and freedom from the sense of insecurity.

What is that jneyam to be known by all? Krishna says: Param Brahma, that ultimate thing to be known is called Brahman. The word Brahman means the infinite one; Satyam, Jñānam, anantham, Brahma, we saw in Taittariya. Infinite means that which is free from threefold limitations; one limitation is called space-wise limitation; another limitation is called timewise limitation; another is called attribute-wise limitation. Space-wise limitation is when I am here; unfortunately, I cannot be elsewhere.

Shree Krishna says that Brahman is beyond the relative terms of existence and non-existence. The Brahman, in Its formless and attributeless aspect, is the object of worship of the jñānīs. In Its personal form, as Bhagavān, states: brahmaṇo hi pratiṣhṭhāham "I am the basis of the formless Brahman." Thus, the formless Brahman and the personal form of God are both two aspects of the Supreme Entity. Both exist everywhere, and hence they both can be called all- pervading. Referring to These, Shree Krishna reveals the contradictory qualities that manifest in God.

Brahman has no form, it has no attribute, it has no time. Since therefore it is not a concept to be conceived. And therefore, Krishna is bringing in the essence of the Upaniṣads. From 13th onwards, we get Upaniṣad says. Brahman does not have śabda, sparśa, rūpa, rasa and gandha. So, no form, colour, taste or touch and therefore you cannot see it; hear it, smell it, taste it or touch it and you are supposed to know that Brahman.

In the description of Brahma. Anadi mat; that which does not have ādhi. ādhi means beginning means both spacial and timewise and therefore it is anantham; the limitless one. And na sat tat na asat uchayate. Because the entire universe you experience is nothing but a flow of cause and effect. Yesterday is the cause for today's condition. Today is the cause for tomorrow's condition. The entire creation I experience is nothing but cause- effect- flow. And Krishna says Brahman is beyond cause and effect. That means it is beyond time. Because cause and effect wherever they exist, there Time is there.

We now see why it is so difficult to understand the eternal essence. It is not like any object or form that can be described in words. It is also not an abstract concept that can be explained through logic, or by comparing it to something else or by combining one concept with another. In earlier chapters we saw how such situations can be handled with negation. If we want to instruct someone on how to select a maroon shirt, we tell them ignore all of the other colours of shirts. The one that is left will be the maroon shirt. Similarly, the eternal essence cannot be comprehended by our mind and senses because it is beyond the mind and senses. It can only be attained through negating everything that is not the eternal essence - by negating the upaadhis or fields.

Now, in the upcoming shlokas, Shri Krishna proceeds step by step to negate the upaadhis of the eternal essence, starting with the most visible ones.

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Meaning:

With hands and legs everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere, it is established in all the worlds, pervading all.

Explanation:

In the Upaniṣads, Brahman is revealed as the ultimate substance out of which the whole creation is made up. Therefore, Brahman is defined as the basic stuff of the universe; basic essence of the universe; the ultimate content of this universe. And all the sciences are also trying to find out only the ultimate substance, out of which the world is made.

Once upon a time, they were talking about a few elements. 110 or 120, they said the whole universe is permutation combination of these few elements only. Thereafter they want to find out whether there is some fundamental truth or substance out of which the elements themselves are made and they arrived at the molecules, whose combinations are the elements. And thereafter they said, all the molecules are nothing but the combination of atom; and the whole universe is atoms in motion. What type of atom; invisible atoms in motions, creates an experience of a visible universe. Atom is invisible, but when all of them join together, it creates a visible tangible universe. And they thought that atom was the fundamental substance. In fact, the very word atom means that which cannot be further divided at all. Atom was thought to be the ultimate substance; and thereafter the scientists broke the atom into sub-atomic particles and therefore they said that there is only particles as the ultimate stuff. The particles are invisible but when they join together, create an appearance of a tangible universe. Then the particles also, they tried to divide further, and they said energy, the intangible energy is the ultimate stuff of the universe. Thus, they are going deeper and deeper and deeper, and their aim is what, to find out, what is the basic, ultimate substance.

God is kartumakartuṁ anyathā karatuṁ samarthaḥ. "He can do the possible, the impossible, and the reverse of the possible." For that all-powerful God, to say that He cannot have hands and feet, is placing a constraint upon Him. However, God's limbs and senses are divine, while ours are material. The difference between the material and the transcendental is that while we are limited to one set of senses, God possesses unlimited hands and legs, eyes, and ears. While our senses exist in one place, God's senses are everywhere. Hence, God sees everything that happens in the world, and hears everything that is ever said. This is possible because, just as He is all-pervading in creation, His eyes and ears are also ubiquitous. The Chhāndogya Upaniṣhad states: sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ brahma (3.14.1) "Everywhere is Brahman." Hence, He accepts food offerings made to Him anywhere in the universe; He hears the prayers of His devotees, wherever they may be; and He is the Witness of all that occurs in the three worlds. If millions of devotees venerate Him at the same time, He has no problem in accepting the prayers of all of them.

How does a child come to learn about electricity? The teacher does not directly tell him that "electricity is defined as a form of energy resulting from the existence of charged particles

such as electrons or protons". The teacher uses what the child already knows and imparts the knowledge to him step by step. So, the teacher may first say that to the child: wherever you see bright light in a bulb, that is electricity. Once the child has grasped this concept, then the teacher may say: wherever you see wires connected, that is electricity. Slowly, as the child is able to understand the nuances of atoms and electrons, the teacher then reveals to him the technical definition.

Shri Krishna uses a similar process to gently reveal the nature of brahman, the eternal essence, also known as "jnyeyam" or the knowable, to us. Now, it is quite easy for us to see action and sentience - the power to experience things - in living creatures everywhere. So Shri Krishna says that wherever we see action in living beings, symbolically represented by the phrase "hands and legs", we should recognize the presence of the eternal essence. Furthermore, wherever we see sentience in living beings, symbolically represented by the phrase "eyes, heads, mouths and ears", we should recognize the presence of the eternal essence.

Going back to the example of the child learning electricity, the child may sometimes think that the electricity in a bulb is different than the electricity in a fan, or that the bulb limits the flow of electricity to the fan. To remove any similar misconceptions about the eternal essence, Shri Krishna says that the eternal essence pervades everywhere. In other words, it is only one eternal essence that is functioning through the organs of knowledge and action of all living creatures in all of the worlds, and that one organ does not limit the functioning of the eternal essence in another organ.

An example commonly used to illustrate this notion is that of space and pot-space. The space that is in a clay pot and the space outside it is the same. But just because the walls of the pot surround it, we label the space inside as "pot-space". The pot is a classic example of an upaadhi, something that as though limits the space in it, but does not do so in reality. Space, then, pervades all pots. Similarly, the organs of all living creatures may seem to limit the eternal essence, but not so in reality.

Having established the starting point for realizing the eternal essence, Shri Krishna goes one step further in the next shloka.

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"sarvendriya- guṇābhāsaṁ,
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asaktaṁ sarva- bhṛc caiva,
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Meaning:

Illuminating the sense functions, yet devoid of the senses. Unattached, yet the supporter of all. Without qualities, and also experiencer of qualities.

Explanation:

When we teach a child about electricity, it is natural to have some doubts or questions about the nature of electricity. Similarly, when we hear a description of the eternal essence, we also will have questions and doubts. Shri Krishna now continues to proceed step by step towards explaining jneyam, the knowable which is the eternal essence, by answering three questions with respect to its relationship with the organs of sense (eyes, mouth etc) and organs of action (hands, legs etc).

First question: Can the eternal essence exist without the organs? Shri Krishna says that the eternal essence can exist without the organs of action and sense, it is “devoid of the senses”, just like electricity can exist without the bulb. Organs of sense and action are one of the means by which the eternal essence expresses itself. It has the power to adapt itself to any form of expression, any upaadhi, just like electricity can power a heater as well as an air conditioner.

Then, can the organs of sense and action exist without the eternal essence? The answer is no, since the eternal essence is “sarvabhrit”, the supporter of all upaadhis in the form of “is-ness” or existence. In any language including English, we cannot say something exists without using the word “is” in some shape or form. The “is-ness” of everything is provided by the eternal essence, like the water provides "is-ness" to the wave. But the eternal essence always remains “asakta” or detached from the upaadhis, just like a movie screen remains detached from the movie.

Now, we know from earlier chapters that the senses are made up of the three qualities or gunaas : sattva, rajas and tamas. They go out into the world to chase sense objects, which are also made up of the very same gunaas. "Gunaa guneshu vartante”, the qualities are playing with the qualities. How does the eternal essence fit into this play of the senses?

Shri Krishna says that even these three qualities are upaadhis, and therefore, the eternal essence is “nirgunam”, not attached to these qualities. When the senses play with their sense objects, the upaadhis of sattva, rajas and tamas are transformed into the upaadhis of joy, sorrow, delusion and so on. The mind, when it participates in this process, becomes the experiencer on account of presence of the eternal essence.

In all of these three answers, we find that the eternal essence is always unattached, whether it is to the organs of sense and actions, to their sense objects or to the three qualities. But when the eternal essence takes on the conditioning or the upaadhi of the organs, it as though moves, and it as though supports their existence. Also, when the eternal essence

takes on the upaadhis of the three gunaas, it as though becomes the experiencer. The key here is the phrase "as though" since this addition or superimposition of upaadhis is only due to ignorance.

Further, Shree Krishna states that He is the sustainer of creation, and yet detached from it. In His form as Lord Vishnu, God maintains the entire creation. He sits in the hearts of all living beings, notes their karmas, and gives the results. Under Lord Vishnu's dominion, Brahma manipulates the laws of material science to ensure that the universe functions stably. Also, under Lord Vishnu's dominion, the celestial gods arrange to provide the air, earth, water, rain, etc. that are necessary for our survival. Hence, God is the Sustainer of all. Yet, He is complete in Himself and is, thus, detached from everyone. The Vedas mention Him as ātmārām, meaning "one who rejoices in the self and has no need of anything external."

The material energy is subservient to God, and it works for His pleasure by serving Him. He is thus the enjoyer of the three guṇas (modes of material nature). At the same time, He is also nirguṇa (beyond the three guṇas), because these guṇas are material, while God is divine.

Let us now recap Shri Krishna's explanation so far. In the last shloka, he said that the eternal essence is that which has hands, legs, eyes, mouth etc. In this shloka, he says that the eternal essence is that which has hands, legs, eyes, mouth etc as upaadhis or conditionings. In other words, he first said that the organs exist, and now he negates them by making them upaadhis. This process of assertion and negation is a technique known as "adhyaaropa apavaada", a step by step means of getting closer and closer to the eternal essence.

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"bahir antaś ca bhūtānām,
acaraḿ caram eva ca..[illegible]
sūkṣmatvāt tad avijñeyaḿ,
dūra- sthaḿ cāntike ca tat"..[illegible]
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Meaning:

Existing outside and inside all beings, moving as well as non-moving. It is very subtle, so it is beyond comprehension. It is distant, yet it is near.

Explanation:

There is a Vedic Mantra that describes God in practically the same manner as Shree Krishna has described here:

tad ejati tan naijati taddūre tadvantike □ tad antar asya sarvasya tadusarvasyāsya bāhyataḥ □□ (Īśhopaniṣhad mantra 5)

"The Supreme Brahman does not walk, and yet He walks; He is far, but He is also near. He exists inside everything, but He is also outside everything."

Previously in verse 13.3, Shree Krishna said that to know God is true knowledge. However, here He states that the Supreme Entity is incomprehensible. This again seems to be a contradiction, but what He means is that God is not knowable by the senses, mind, and intellect. The intellect is made from the material energy, so it cannot reach God who is Divine. However, if God Himself bestows His grace upon someone, that fortunate soul can come to know Him.

As Shri Krishna lists the indicators of the eternal essence, we may be tempted to start looking for it with our eyes, just like we look for a lost object in the house. However, we need to continuously remind ourselves that the eternal essence is neither an object nor a concept that can be grasped by the mind. Shri Krishna uses the Upanishadic style of describing the eterna essence through contradictions and paradoxes in this sequence of shlokas, and especially in the current shloka.

The first contradiction mentioned is that the eternal essence is both inside and outside all inert and living entities. This point cautions us against conceptualizing the eternal essence as limited by space, as if it is only available in one location and not the other. A somewhat crude analogy is mobile phone signals, which are essentially radio waves. Radio waves are all- pervasive, and they penetrate all solid objects, enabling us to make phone calls from inside as well as outside buildings.

The second contradiction is that the eternal essence is to be known as the ultimate knowledge, yet it is beyond comprehension, due to its subtle nature. Using the radio waves analogy, we can say that none of our senses can detect radio waves. But if we know how to build a device that can access radio waves, we can harness their power to our advantage.

Similarly, the eternal essence remains beyond the comprehension of those who have not purified their mind. But for those who have purified their mind and followed a systematic method of enquiry under the guidance of scriptures and a teacher, it is ever accessible.

This leads us to the third contradiction. For those who have enquired about the nature of the eternal essence systematically, it is immediately available at all times as the self, the “I” within us. But for those who are ignorant, it is far away. Shankaracharya says that it is unattainable even in millions of years for such people. Whenever we focus on names and forms, we lose sight of the self. But when we remove the upaadhis of names and forms, we come back to the self, the “I”, that is behind all the names and forms, just like the movie screen.

Note that any time we use analogies such as radio waves, we are trying to conceptualize the eternal essence which is beyond all conception. We need to consider such analogies as helpful pointers, and nothing more.

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Meaning:

And undivided, yet it exists as though divided in all beings. That, which is to be known, is the nourisher of beings. It is the devourer, and it is the creator also.

Explanation:

Shri Krishna continues to elaborate upon the topic of jneyam, that which is to be known, which is brahman, the eternal essence. Here he further describes the distortion created by upaadhis or conditionings in our understanding of the eternal essence. He begins by asserting that the eternal essence is undivided, it is unbroken and continuous. It cannot be chopped up into pieces. But due to the effect of space as an upaadhi, it appears as if the eternal essence exists differently in various beings.

God may appear to be divided amongst the objects of His creation, but since He is all that exists, He remains undivided as well. For example, space may seem to be divided amongst the objects that it contains. Yet, all objects are within the one entity called space, which manifested at the beginning of creation. Again, the reflection of the sun in puddles of water appears divided, and yet the sun remains indivisible.

Just as the ocean throws up waves and then absorbs them back into itself, similarly God creates the world, maintains it, and then absorbs it back into Himself. Therefore, He may be equally seen as the Creator, the Maintainer, and the Destroyer of everything.

We can go back to the example of the clay pot and space. If we have a hundred pots on the floor, it appears as though the space in the room is divided into a hundred “pot- spaces”, due to the boundary created by the wall of each pot. But in reality, space can never be divided or

chopped up. Or we can also look at the example of electricity, which looks like it functions differently in each appliance, but is really one continuous circuit that begins at the power plant. If our senses cannot access upaadhis such as pots or appliances, they mistakenly assume that subtle things such as space and electricity are absent. Similarly, the body of a living entity serves as an upaadhi where we can feel the presence of the eternal essence.

So if there is only one continuous and undivided eternal essence, how do we account for all of the creation, sustenance, and destruction of names and forms in the universe? Shri Krishna says that ultimately, it is the eternal essence that provides the foundation for the lifecycle of the universe. Waves are created, sustained and dissolved back into the ocean. If we pay attention to the waves, we lose sight of the ocean that is one undivided foundation which is behind all of the waves. We come back to the same point again: the eternal essence provides existence, the “is-ness”, to all names and forms in the universe.

Now, if the eternal essence cannot be comprehended by the senses, is it dark and empty like a black hole? This is clarified in the next shloka.

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Meaning:

That is the light even among all the lights, and it has been spoken of as beyond darkness. It is knowledge, that which is to be known, and the goal of knowledge. It especially resides in the hearts of all.

Explanation:

In prior verses, the "sat" or existence aspect of the eternal essence was highlighted. Here, the "chit" or awareness aspect is elaborated upon. Awareness or sentience is what makes an entity know about it surroundings as well about itself, as we had seen earlier. Shri Krishna says that the eternal essence is the "light among all the lights". Without the eternal essence, we would have no awareness, no sentience.

The knowledge of Braham is taken from upnishada in Geeta, therefore, we also read the upnishada for Braham.

The Kaṭhopaniṣhad says:

tameva bhāntamanubhāti sarvaṁ tasya bhāsā saravamidaṁ vibhāti (2.2.15)

"God makes all things luminous. It is by His luminosity that all luminous objects give light."

sūryastapati tejasendraḥ(Vedas)

"By His radiance, the sun and moon become luminous."

In other words, the luminosity of the sun and the moon is borrowed from God. They may lose their luminosity someday, but God can never lose His.

"hiraṇmayē parē kośē virajaṁ Brahma niśkalam|

nacchubhraṁ jyōtiṣāṁ jyōtistad yadātmavidō viduḥ || Mundaka II.9 ||"

In a supreme golden sheath the Brahman lies, stainless, without parts. A Splendour is That It is the Light of Lights, It is That which the self-knowers know.

"na tatra sūryō bhāti na candratārakaṁ nēmā vidhyutō bhānti kutō:'yamagniḥ|

takēva bhāntamanubhāti sarvaṁ tasya bhāsā sarvamidaṁ vibhāti Mundaka II.10||"

There the sun shines not and the moon has no splendour and the stars are blind; there these lightnings flash not, how then shall burn this earthly fire? All that shines is but the shadow of his shining; all this universe is effulgent with his light.

Imagine a classroom of students that are taking an examination. The student on the last bench can see all of the students in front of him. The student seated in the second to last

row can see other students, but not the last row student. Also, the student in the front row cannot see the student in the last row. The awareness provided by the eternal essence is like the student in the last row. The next student is the intellect, followed by the mind and the senses. In other word, the eternal essence gives awareness to the intellect, which gives it to the mind, and then to the senses. But the mind, intellect and senses cannot immediately contact the eternal essence.

Now, just like the word “light” refers to knowledge, the word “darkness” refers to ignorance. By saying that the eternal essence is beyond ignorance, Shri Krishna points out the uniqueness of the awareness aspect of the eternal essence. If we light a lamp in a dark room, it dispels the darkness. We cannot have darkness and light coexist. However, the eternal essence is present in individuals who are ignorance of it, as well as those few rare individuals who have realized it. This unique ability of the eternal essence to illumine ignorance is why Shri Krishna calls it “beyond darkness”.

In Vēdānta light means that in whose presence things are known or recognised. Light is defined as that in whose presence things are known. Now extending this principle, the Upaniṣad says that every sense organ can also be called light. Every sense organ also can be called light; because in the presence of sense organs, things are known; in their absence, things are not known. And coming in this direction, the Upaniṣad says the ultimate light is nothing but the consciousness principle, because in the presence of consciousness alone, you can know everything and if consciousness is not there, an inert thing cannot know anything. And therefore, the ultimate light in whose presence you can know everything, in whose absence you do not know anything, that light is consciousness.

So, how can we use our antahakarana, our intellect, mind and senses, to realize that eternal essence? Shri Krishna provides a three-step process. We use “jnyaanam”, the means of knowledge indicated in the twenty attributes such as humility mentioned earlier in the chapter, to gradually reduce the importance we give to upaadhis or conditionings. As we systematically study the scriptures under the guidance of a teacher, the eternal essence comes into our awareness as “jneyam”, the object of knowledge. But only through constant contemplation, reflection and meditation does the eternal essence becomes “jnyaanagamyam”, the goal of knowledge, where all notions of duality are removed, and we remain established in the eternal essence.

God has three unique names: Ved-kṛit, Ved-vit, and Ved-vedya. He is Ved-kṛit, which means, “One who manifested the Vedas.” He is Ved-vit, which means, “One who knows the Vedas.” He is also Ved-vedya which means, “One who is to be known through the Vedas.” In the same manner, Shree Krishna describes the Supreme Entity as the jñeya (the object worthy of knowing), jñāna- gamya (the goal of all knowledge), and jñāna (true knowledge).

Formless energy gets converted into formed and tangible matter. Energy is intangible and when energy is converted into matter, it becomes tangible. And when matter is converted to

energy, again it becomes intangible. So if intangible energy can appear as tangible matter, Vēdānta says, the non- tangible Brahman is the ultimate cause of this universe and that alone appears as the tangible universe. It is jagat kāraṇam. It is in the form of everything. And therefore jñānam, Jñēyam, that Brahman alone is jñānam, jñānam means the means of knowledge. So that through which we come to know that means of knowledge is also Brahman and Jñēyam, the object that you know is also Brahman, so the subject is Brahman, the object is Brahman, the instrument is Brahman, sarvaṁ Brahma mayam jagat. So jñānam, Jñēyam, and jñāna gamyaṁ. And through this knowledge, Brahmajñānam, the destination that you want to reach that destination is also Brahman. The knower is Brahman, the knowing instrument is Brahman, the known object is Brahman, and the destination you want to reach ultimately is also Brahman. In short, sarvaṁ Brahma mayam jagat.

Shri Krishna concludes this shloka by reminding us that all these three stages - preparation, study and reflection - are enabled only through the intellect, which is referred to here as the “hridi” or heart of all human beings. Only humans have the capability to access the eternal essence. That is why we come across the statement “a human birth is rare to attain” in many prominent spiritual texts.

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Meaning:

In this manner, the field, as well as knowledge, and that which is to be known, has been described in brief. By understanding this, my devotee becomes qualified to attain my state.

Explanation:

Shri Krishna concludes the current topic in this shloka. He spoke about “kshetra”, the field, in shlokas five and six. The field comprises twenty-four aspects which are the building blocks of the universe. This includes the five great elements, the intellect and others. The field also comprises seven modifications by which the individual comes into contact with the world. These include desire, hatred and others. The field works like a machine but is devoid of awareness in itself and is inert. It needs to borrow awareness from some other source. This source is the eternal essence, it is “jneyam”, that which is to be known. The field acts as an upaadhi, something which as though limits and conditions the eternal essence.

If we are attracted by the dance of an ocean’s waves, we will never be able to appreciate the grandeur and beauty of the entire ocean, because our attention will be on the waves which are upaadhis that as though limit our understanding of the ocean. Similarly, if we need to understand the eternal essence, we have to learn how to gradually minimize the impact of the upaadhis of the field and shift our attention to the eternal essence. “Jnyaanam”, the means of knowledge that enables us to mentally remove these upaadhis, is elaborated in shlokas seven to eleven.

Once we have learnt how to mentally remove upaadhis, we are ready to understand the eternal essence. From shlokas twelve to seventeen, Shri Krishna uses paradoxes and contradictions to explain the nature of the eternal essence. Our intellect is a product of the field and will never grasp what the eternal essence is. Paradoxical statements like “it is near, yet it is far” are used so that our intellect doesn’t mistakenly turn the eternal essence into yet another concept.

Shri Krishna says that those who have inquired into the eternal essence in the manner prescribed above are qualified to attain the state of Ishvara, which is liberation. But this state cannot be attained unless we become devotees of Ishvara. **A devotee means one who knows that whatever he sees, hears or touches is nothing but Ishvara, and that Ishvara is residing in him as his self.** Only one who has such a firm conviction through meditation that everything, including himself, is ultimately Ishvara, will attain liberation.

Only the bhaktas (devotees) can truly understand this knowledge. Those who practice karm, jñāna, aṣhṭāṅg, etc. devoid of bhakti cannot truly understand the import of the Bhagavad Gita, even though they themselves may think that they do. Bhakti is the essential ingredient in all paths leading to knowledge of God.

Jagadguru Shree Kripaluji Maharaj puts this very nicely:

jo hari sevā hetu ho, soī karm bakhāna, jo hari bhagati baṛhāve, soī samujhiya jñāna (Bhakti Śhatak 66)

"That work which is done in devotion to God is the real karm; and that knowledge which increases love for God is real knowledge."

Devotion not only helps us to know God, it also makes the devotee godlike, and hence, Shree Krishna states that the devotees attain His nature. This has been emphasized in the Vedic scriptures again and again. The Vedas state:

bhaktirevainaṁ nayati bhaktirevainaṁ paśhyati bhaktirevainaṁ darśhayati bhakti vaśhaḥ puruṣho bhaktireva bhūyasī (Māṭhar Śhruti)

"Bhakti alone can lead us to God. Bhakti alone can make us see God. Bhakti alone can bring us in the presence of God. God is under the control of bhakti. Hence, do bhakti exclusively."

Again, the Muṇḍakopaniṣhad states:

upāsate puruṣhaṁ ye hyakāmā-ste śhukrametadativartanti dhīrāḥ (3.2.1)

"Those who engage in bhakti toward the Supreme Divine Personality, giving up all material desires, escape the cycle of life and death." Yet again, the Śhwetāśhvatar Upaniṣhad states:

yasya deve parā bhaktiryathā deve tathā gurau, tasyaite kathitā hyarthā prakāśhante mahātmanaḥ (6.23)

"Those who have unflinching bhakti toward God and identical bhakti toward the Guru, in the hearts of such saintly persons, by the grace of God the imports of the Vedic scriptures are automatically revealed." The other Vedic Scriptures also reiterate this emphatically:

na sādhayati māṁ yogo na sānkhyaṁ dharma uddhava, na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo yathā bhaktir mamorjitā (Bhagavatam 11.14.20)

Shree Krishna states: "Uddhav, I am not attained by aṣhṭāṅg- yog, by the study of sānkhya, cultivation of scriptural knowledge, austerities, nor by renunciation. It is by bhakti alone that I am won over." In the Bhagavad Gita, Shree Krishna repeatedly states this, in verses 8.22, 11.54, etc. In verse 18.55, He says:

"Only by loving devotion to Me does one come to know who I am in Truth. Then, having come to know Me, My devotee enters into full consciousness of Me."

The Ramayan also says:

rāmahi kevala premu piārā, jāni leu jo jānanihārā.

"The Supreme Lord Ram is only attained through love. Let this truth be known by all who care to know."

Actually, this principle is emphasized in the other religious traditions as well. In the Jewish Torah it is written: **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all you might (Deuteronomy 6.5).**

Jesus of Nforemost,repeats this commandment in the Christian New Testament as one of the first and foremost commandments to follow (Mark 12.30)

The Guru Granth Sahib states:

hari sama jaga mahañ vastu nahiṅ, prem, panth soñ pantha sadguru sama sajjan nahīñ, gītā sama nahiñ grantha

"There is no personality like God; there is no path equal to the path of devotion; there is no human equal to the Guru; and there is no scripture that can compare with the Gita."

Now, does all this explanation help me understand what ultimately causes me to experience sorrow in my life? In the next shloka, Shri Krishna begins a new topic to explain this issue in detail.

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prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva,
viddhy anādī ubhāv api..□
vikārāṁś ca guṇāṁś caiva,
viddhi prakṛti- sambhavān..□□

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Meaning:

Know that surely, both Prakriti and Purusha are without beginning. Also, know that in fact, all modifications and qualities are born of Prakriti.

Explanation:

Shri Krishna has completed four topics out of six topics. Topics completed are Kṣetraṁ, kṣētrajña, Jñānam and Jñēyam. Remaining two prakṛti and puruṣaḥ is now taken up by him. Verses 20-24 is puruṣah and prakṛti. And this puruṣah and prakṛti are very much similar to Kṣētraṁ and kṣētrajña. And in the seventh chapter, Krishna used the word para prakṛti and apara prakṛti, para prakṛti being consciousness and apara prakṛti being matter. Now the same Krishna is discussing again in the name of puruṣa and prakṛti; puruṣa means caitanya tatvam; the independent- consciousness- principle and prakṛti means the matter- principle. The fundamental basic invisible matter, which can be compared to energy. Compared to energy. Energy is invisible version of matter. And these two, Krishna is going to talk about in the following verses.

we can understand the word Puruṣah as Brahman and we can understand the prakṛti as Māya and therefore the discussion is regarding Brahman and Māya of the upaniṣad. These two words puruṣa and prakṛti are generally used in Saṅkya philosophy, but rarely in Vēdānta also, we use the word puruṣa and prakṛti for Brahman and Māya.

Arjuna, may you understand puruṣa and prakṛti as the two basic principles which are beginningless- principles. Anādi means without a beginning, and it is in dual number which means puruṣa is also Anādi, prakṛti is also Anādi. And this puruṣah- prakṛti mixture alone we call Īśvaraḥ. Prakṛti plus puruṣah is equal to Īśvaraḥ. Brahman plus Māya is equal to Īśvara.

First common feature is: both of them are beginningless. And the second one is that both are together cause of the universe. exactly like the father and mother. Father by himself cannot be the cause of a child, mother by herself can never be the cause of a child; father and mother alone can together enjoy the causal status. And that is why jagatapitharau vandē parvathi paramēsvarau.

And these two principals have got uncommon features also. What is the first difference between puruṣa and prakṛti? Puruṣa is cētana tatvam; it is consciousness-principle; whereas prakṛti or Māya is acētana tatvam, it is the basic matter principle.

The second difference is the puruṣa is nirvikāra tatvam; consciousness principle is not subject to modification or change. It is ever the changeless principle, time cannot influence consciousness. Time cannot touch consciousness. Consciousness is not within the field of time. In fact, some scientists themselves are saying this. Whereas prakṛti or matter principle is subject to time and therefore subject to modification; in Sanskrit savikāra tatvam. So cētana tatvam-acētana tatvam is the first difference; nirvikāra tatvam-savikāra-tatvam is the second difference.

And because of the influence of time alone, matter is violently undergoing change, even becoming energy is a form of change; matter becomes energy. In fact in an atomic explosion; in a nuclear explosion, what is happening is, matter is converted into tremendous energy. And therefore, matter is subject to change to energy form; energy is subject to change into matter form; and within matter itself, it violently undergoes change; the sun is changing violently, the planets are changing and even the minutest atom is undergoing change. Therefore, savikāra tatvam. And the other one nirvikāra tatvam.

Then the third important difference or uncommon feature is that Puruṣa, the consciousness principle is free from all attributes. It is absolutely property-free.

Whether you enumerate the properties as satva rajas tamō guṇa, then we say consciousness is free from all these three. If you enumerate the properties as śabda, sparśa, rūpa, rasa and gandha, śabda means sound, sparśa, means touch, rūpa means form, rasa means taste, gandha means smell; then consciousness is free from all these five properties.

In short, consciousness is property- less- attributeless. In Sanskrit Nirguṇa tatvam. Whereas matter is endowed with all the properties.

And then comes the fourth and final property for our discussion. You can have several but four only for our discussion. This is technical thing, which is not directly relevant, but for future questions this will be required.

And what is that difference? Cētana or the consciousness- principle has got an independent existence and therefore it is said to be satya tatvam. The existence of consciousness is intrinsic, it is independent, it is unborrowed. That is why we say, cit ēva sat. And therefore, it is satya tatvam; whereas the matter principle does not have an independent existence; the existence of matter depends upon the consciousness principle.

Even to prove that you are all studying Geeta, you have conscious while studying. If your conscious is not with you, your studying Geeta cannot be stated merely joining of WhatsApp group. And therefore, the existence of a thing, a material thing, depends upon the consciousness principle and therefore matter enjoys or suffers dependent existence. In Sanskrit we call it mithyā tatvam. Satyam and mithyā. we will deal later for the same.

These are the four fundamental differences between Puruṣa and Prakṛ̣ti. Such a puruṣa-prakṛ̣ti mixture called God was there even before the origination of the world. And the most interesting thing is, that when we say God alone existed before the creation, we cannot even answer the question, where was He located. because, before creation, even ākāśa was not there. Ākāśa comes only after creation. How do you know?

Even scientists point out that you cannot imagine space at the time of or before the big bang. How they have reached Vēdānta. They will say Vēdānta has borrowed Science. Long before science came, it has been said. Therefore, you cannot conceive of even space (akasa), before Sṛ̣iṣṭi.

So, when I talk about God before the origination of space, how can I talk about the location of God, because the concept of location requires space? Therefore, do not ask where He was. And such an unlocatable God who is a mixture of Puruṣa and Prakṛ̣ti was there before Sṛ̣iṣṭi.

Puruṣa and Prakṛ̣ti, nothing will happen to puruṣa tattvam, because puruṣa tatvam is not conditioned by time and therefore Puruṣa, the cētana tatvam will remain the same. Before Sṛ̣iṣṭi; during Sṛ̣iṣṭi, after pralayam, all the time, chaitanyam is Nirvikāram.

All modifications and qualities are born out of Prakriti. Maaya and prakriti refer to the same thing. Prakriti is a power wielded by Ishvara. It is beyond the comprehension of our intellect since our intellect itself is a product of Prakriti. The only way to understand Prakriti is to think of it as a magician’s illusion. This Prakriti gives rise to five elements that produce the entire visible universe. These combinations or modifications of Prakriti are termed as “vikaaraas”. Prakriti also comprises the three “gunaas” or qualities which are sattva, rajas and tamas. These qualities manifest as mental states such as happiness, sorrow and attachment.

In other words, if we go back in time, if we press the rewind button, we will see that everything merges back into Prakriti, everything has come from Prakriti. Now, let us get practical. Whenever we experience emotions such as sorrow, grief, anger and so on, it is Prakriti that creates it, not the self, not the "I". This is what was explained in the shloka. But, when anger arises in our mind, for instance, we always say "I am angry". How do we come to the conclusion that the "I" is angry when it is Prakriti that created the anger? This is taken up next.

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Meaning:

With regard to the source of actions in the body and its instruments, Prakriti is said to be the cause. With regard to experiencing joy and sorrow, Purusha is said to be the cause.

Explanation:

The material energy, with the direction of Brahma, creates myriad elements and forms of life that compose creation. Brahma makes the master plan, and the material energy executes it. The Vedas state that there are 8.4 million species of life in the material world. All these bodily forms are transformations of the material energy. Hence, material nature is responsible for all the cause and effect in the world.

Let us bring back the example of the movie projector from the seventh chapter so that we can better understand this shloka. Imagine a gigantic IMAX screen on which Prakriti or nature projects the life of every human being in the world. Think of it as the world's largest soap opera. We can now examine the first half of this shloka. It shows what Prakriti can create through its projections. It can project "kaarya", the body of a person. It can project "karana", the instruments of the body which include the five organs of sense, five organs of

actions, the mind, the intellect and the ego. It cannot just project one body, but everybody in the world.

Now, here comes an important point. Shri Krishna says that Prakriti is the source of all actions in this world, not the Purusha. We are now coming back to the topic that was hinted upon in the karma yoga chapter. Typically, most of us attribute the agency, or the doer ship of our actions, to our own self. We say “I did this”, “I did not do that” and so on. Shri Krishna makes it perfectly clear that the intellect, the ego and the mind in our body receive input from our senses, filter it through our vaasanaas, and send instructions to our organs of action. All this is going on within the realm of Prakriti, that continues projecting the IMAX movie of the world. In other words, the “I” does not do anything, but Prakriti does everything.

Next, the role of the Purusha is described. The Purusha is the awareness principle, the knowledge principle present in the body. From our perspective, he is concerned with the experience of only one body out of the millions of bodies in that IMAX movie - our body. What is his role? His role is to know. If we put a drop of a bitter liquid on our tongue, it sends an electrical current to the mind based on the chemical makeup of the bitter liquid. But ultimately, it is only the Purusha that has the capacity to come up with the knowledge that “this liquid is bitter”. On one level, Purusha knows what the senses and the mind report. Without the Purusha, there will be nothing to know what Prakriti has projected. It would be like projecting a movie without an audience to see it.

So then, when this knowledge of bitterness is filtered through our vaasanaas or our “programming”, it can result in either joy or sorrow. Some of us like bitter taste, some of us don’t. This difference comes from the variety in our vaasanaas, our individual programming. So whenever external objects are arranged by Prakriti in a pattern that is conducive to our vaasanaas, the Purusha experiences joy. In other words, whenever we say, “I am happy”, it is the Purusha experiencing happiness. Similarly, sorrow is also experienced when objects are undesirable.

Puruṣaḥ is not located anywhere as an object, the puruṣaḥ, the cētana, nirvikāra, nirguṇa, satya tatvam puruṣa, is I, the very subject, who is enclosed in the material body, who is enclosed in the material mind, the enclosure is prakr̥ti, the enclosed consciousness I, am Puruṣaḥ. And therefore, Krishna says Puruṣaḥ is bhōktā, means what; here bhōktā the witness the sakshi caitanyam, the subject- experiencer principle.

Here, encapsulated in these two lines of this shloka, is the state of our lives. Our body with its organs interacts with other bodies in this world. It performs actions whose results are experienced by the Purusha as joy and sorrow. The cycle of joy and sorrow continues from one action to another action, from one experience to another experience. This is “samsaara”.

Now, there seems to be a problem. Right from the second chapter, we have been told that our true nature is the eternal essence. It pervades the entire universe. It is eternal, indestructible and indivisible. We have also been told that Prakriti, through some inexplicable magic, projects the entire universe of names and forms. How then, does the third entity called Purusha come into being? And also, how does it take on one body out of all the bodies in the world as its own, and experience only that body's joy and sorrow?

Shri Krishna reveals the root cause of samsaara, of our repeated experience of joy and sorrow, in the next shloka.

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puruṣaḥ prakṛti-stho hi,
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kāraṇaṁ guṇa-saṅgo 'sya,
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Meaning:

Purusha, when seated in Prakriti, experiences the qualities born of Prakriti. Attachment to these qualities is the cause of his birth in good and evil wombs.

Explanation:

Puruṣah (conscious) and Prakriti (Nature) both are beginningless. But nature has dissimilarity with consciousness in four manners: Puruṣah is conscious principle, Prakṛti is inert; Puruṣah is changeless principle, Prakṛti is changing principle; Puruṣah is without any attribute, attributeless whereas the Prakṛti has all the attributes and finally Puruṣah is satyam, Prakṛti is mithya. **So Nirguṇa, Nirvikāra, Satya, cētana tatvam Puruṣa. Saguṇa, Savikāra, Mithya, Acētana tatvam Prakṛti.**

Therefore, originally, before the creation evolves or the world evolves, the puruṣah was neither the subject, nor the prakṛti was object; there was no subject- object transaction at all, before the creation evolved. Then when did the puruṣah get the subject status? When the universe evolved, naturally the body was also created, the mind also is created and after the creation of the body and mind, the all- pervading puruṣa got enclosed within the body-mind- enclosure. Previously the enclosures were not there, therefore this consciousness was an all-pervading unenclosed consciousness; but after the creation of body- mind, we have got enclosed consciousness. Previously it was unenclosed consciousness. Now it is body mind enclosed consciousness; and that becomes the subject- principle. And then the whole world become object. Therefore, consciousness becomes a subject

The Vedas state that there are 8.4 million species of life in the material world. All these bodily forms are transformations of the material energy. Hence, material nature is responsible for all the cause and effect in the world. The soul gets a bodily form (field of activity) according to its past karmas, and it identifies itself with the body, mind, and intellect. Thus, it seeks the pleasure of the bodily senses. When the senses come in contact with the sense objects, the mind experiences a pleasurable sensation. Since the soul identifies with the mind, it vicariously enjoys that pleasurable sensation. In this way, the soul perceives the sensations of both pleasure and pain, through the medium of the senses, mind, and intellect.

Imagine that two young brothers and their grandmother are watching a boxing match on TV. One brother is a huge fan of boxer A, and the other brother of boxer B. The two brothers get so involved in the match that they feel they themselves are in the boxing ring. The brothers start throwing punches in the air, mimicking the actions of the boxers. Also, when boxer A punches boxer B, the first brother feels exhilaration whereas the second brother feels pain. All this time, their grandmother is watching the match without any of these reactions.

This involvement with the boxers doesn't end with the match. Boxer A always likes to wear a headband, so the first brother starts to wear headbands in the house. Boxer B always snaps his fingers at the end of every sentence, so the second brother begins to do that as well, much to the annoyance of his parents. Both the brothers have become so infatuated with their boxers that they take on their likes and dislikes. We may think that such behaviour only happens with children and teenagers, but something similar has happened to all of us, causing us to get trapped in samsaara.

We are stuck twice in samsaaraa. First, Shri Krishna says that the eternal essence has mistakenly identified itself with one body due to avidyaa or ignorance, just like the brother identified himself with boxer A. Instead of watching the IMAX movie of the universe like the grandmother, we get stuck to one character in that movie. When the eternal essence as though gets deluded with ignorance, it becomes the Purusha, and becomes "seated in Prakriti". It forgets it real nature as infinite, indivisible and blissful. It assumes the properties of our body and thinks itself to be finite, divisible and sorrowful.

Second, having identified with a finite body, having taken the "upaadhi" or conditioning of a body, we get attached to the play of Prakriti, the play of the three gunaas or qualities. We get so attached to the forms of Prakriti that we generate selfish desires in order to repeatedly contact these forms, which are nothing but objects and people. Seeking a shinier car is a mistaken attempt to find joy in the car instead of understanding our true nature as joy itself. We become the brother who starts wearing a headband to feel happy, just because boxer A does so, when the brother was happy even before he knows what boxing was.

So then, how do we get out of this twostep problem of samsaara which causes us to "take birth in good and evil wombs"? We solve step one - attachment to gunaas - through

vairaagya or dispassion, we learn to slowly wean ourselves off the influence of the three gunaas. We then solve step two - ignorance of our true nature - through jnyaana or knowledge, when we learn of our real nature as the eternal essence and internalize it through meditation.

An illustration of Purusha getting entangled in Prakriti is taken up next.

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"upadraṣṭānumantā ca,
bhartā bhoktā maheśvaraḥ..□
paramātmeti cāpy ukto,
dehe 'smin puruṣaḥ paraḥ"..□□

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Meaning:

He who is the witness, the permitter, the nourisher, the experiencer, the master and who is also spoken of as the supreme self, is the supreme Purusha in this body.

Explanation:

Let try to dis-identify from the Prakṛti- enclosure and learn to identify with the Puruṣa, the enclosed- content chaitanyam (soul). So, Krishna says: Asmin dēhē Puruṣaḥ; that Puruṣa tatvam, what type of Puruṣah? nirguṇa, nirvikāra, satya, cētana tatvam say **NNSC tatvam.** That Puruṣa, do not search anywhere, it is like looking outside for ākāśa. You need not search anywhere, that Puruṣa is there asmin dēhē. Just as ākāśa is in every container; this particular body- mind- container also has got the Puruṣa in the form of Sākṣi caitanyam (identify soul) and do not search for the Sākṣi also; because that Sākṣi caitanyam, I am the subject. And this Puruṣaḥ; what is its nature? Its nature is quiet opposite to the nature of Prakṛti. In every feature, this identify soul (Prakṛti Puruṣah) is different from Prakṛti (nature).

Let we understand the great features of Puruṣa.consciousness is inside the body; and then finally I say consciousness is outside the body; then finally I say consciousness is not inside or outside, all the bodies are inside the consciousness and therefore where is consciousness? The answer is; you should ask a counter-question, where is it not? Therefore, it is called paraḥ. paraḥ means free from all limitations.

So here Krishna says Atma is a witness, not remaining far away; but upadraṣṭā, intimately pervading the body, mind complex, it illumines the body- mind complex; just as the light illumines the hand; how, by pervading the hand. Bulb is far away; but the light, the prākāśah

is the luminosity is upon the hand. Therefore, it is a proximate illuminator. Proximate illuminator means one who is near, pervading the hand is illumining. Similarly, Puruṣa pervades every cell of my body. This inert bundle of chemicals, which does not have consciousness of its own; this inert bundle of chemicals is now sentient and alive, only because Puruṣah pervades and makes this body experienceable to me. And therefore upadraṣṭā. Close witness.

So, what is the real nature of puruṣah? Purusah is free one, free entity. So, body alone is a bound entity because body being Prakṛ̥ti, it is affected by the other Prakṛ̥ti; we have seen earlier; guṇaḥ guṇeṣu varthanthe; body is matter, world is matter, therefore body will definitely be affected by the world. Nobody can stop. In summer body will sweat; In winter, the body will shiver. And in old days, the body will collapse. It will lose all its faculties. Similarly, mind is also matter; the world is also matter; mind also will be influenced by the matter. however great you may be, the mind is going to empathize with that situation. That why it is said braham Satya, jagat Mithaya.

Imagine that your grandfather comes to stay in your apartment for a short vacation. Seeing a new senior citizen in the building, the apartment complex association invites him to one of their cultural programs. Your grandfather thoroughly enjoys it. Next, the association asks him permission to host their next weekly meeting in your apartment, which he readily agrees to. He is so excited about the meeting that he prepares tea and snacks for them. By the next weekly meeting, he has become so involved in the association meetings that he feels the need to vote on issues that he strongly feels about. He gets so involved that it is just a matter of time before he is elected president of the apartment complex association.

Your grandfather, who had nothing whatsoever to do with the building, started out as a pure witness, then become the permitter, nourisher, experiencer and subsequently the master of the building association. Similarly, Shri Krishna says that the eternal essence that has nothing whatsoever to do with Prakriti, develops a strong identification with a body. By taking various upaadhis or conditionings such as the body, the mind, the vital forces, the intellect and so on, it becomes the permitter, the nourisher, the experiencer and the master of this body, just like your grandfather took on various roles as a member of the apartment complex association.

Practically speaking, we don’t need to worry too much about this. All that we need to know that we don’t have to go out into the world hunting for Ishvara. Ishvara is resident in our body as the permitter, nourisher, experiencer and so on. He is the paramaatmaa, the supreme self-resident as the “I” in all beings. This is how we have to understand what Purusha means. The more we pay attention to the Ishvara aspect in us, the less importance we give to the upaadhis, especially the ego. People who have reached the pinnacle of their spiritual journey eventually lose their individuality and themselves become the universal witness, the upadrashtaa, remaining unaffected by the goings on of Prakriti.

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"ya evaṁ vetti puruṣaṁ,
prakṛtiṁ ca guṇaiḥ saha..□
sarvathā vartamāno 'pi,
na sa bhūyo 'bhijāyate"..□□

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Meaning:

He who thus knows Purusha and Prakriti, along with the gunaas, no matter what his conduct, is never born again.

Explanation:

Here Krishna points out the clear knowledge about Prakṛti and Puruṣa will give a person will a great relief from the burden of samsāra. A life which appeared a struggle till now; a life which is very big drag, which is full of cares and worries, that life becomes a very very great relief, if I have made this discriminative knowledge and I have learned to claim I am Puruṣa and all the attributes belong to Prakṛti.

Ignorance has led the soul into its present predicament. Having forgotten its spiritual identity as a tiny fragment of God, it has fallen into material consciousness. Therefore, knowledge is vital for resurrecting itself from its present position. The Śhwetāśhvatar Upaniṣhad states exactly the same thing:

“There are three entities in creation—the ever-changing material nature, the unchangeable souls, and the Master of both, who is the Supreme Lord. Ignorance of these entities is the cause of bondage of the soul, while knowledge of them helps it cut asunder the fetters of Maya.”

To better understand this shloka, let us quickly take a look at the theory of karma. It says that each of us comes with three types of karmas, which are unfulfilled desires that become seeds of future actions. Total karmas or “sanchita” karmas are the entire stock of our karmas. Present life karmas or “prarabdha” karmas are those karmas that are activated in our present life. Expected karmas or “agaami” karmas are those karmas that will be

generated due to the results of actions in the present life. These karmas get added to our sanchita karmas, our stock of karmas.

As an illustration, consider this. The arrows in an archer's quiver are sanchita karmas, the arrows that have left his bow are prarabdha karmas, and the arrows that are loaded on the bow are agaami karmas. The Vedas assert that so long as an individual maintains a stock of karmas, he has to take on a body to exhaust those karmas. In each birth, a portion of the stock of karmas is allocated to the individual so that he can exhaust them. By generating further selfish desires, the individual adds to his stock of karmas, and the cycle of birth goes on indefinitely.

Shri Krishna says that the one who has properly understood the relationship between Purusha and Prakriti, one who has understood the identification of the eternal essence with Prakriti due to ignorance and the consequent rushing after the gunaas, is never born again. This means that his stock of karmas is destroyed, just like a spark of fire destroys dry hay. He does not generate any further selfish desires, because he is no longer fascinated by the play of the three gunaas. Why does this happen? When one realizes that selfish desire is created by ignorance of one's true nature, it wipes out any notion of selfishness completely. There is no longer an urge to come into contact with Prakriti.

Now, this person still has to deal with his prarabdha. His present life karmas continue to be active until his body drops off, after which he does not have to take any further births. The word "api" in the shloka indicates that the individual can continue to perform his duties even if he has realized his true nature as the eternal essence, just like king Janaka continued to rule his kingdom even though he had achieved liberation.

Shri Krishna concludes the topic of Purusha and Prakriti with this shloka.

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Meaning:

Some behold the self in the self by the self through meditation, others through Saankhya and yoga, and others do so through karma yoga.

Explanation:

Variety is the universal characteristic of God's creation. No two leaves of a tree are alike; no two human beings have exactly the same fingerprints; no two human societies have the same features. Similarly, all souls are unique, and they have their distinctive traits that have been acquired in their unique journey through the cycle of life and death. So in the realm of spiritual practice as well, not all are attracted to the same kind of practice. The beauty of

the Bhagavad Gita and the Vedic scriptures is that they realize this inherent variety amongst human beings and accommodate it in their instructions.

So far, it seems like we have studied two unrelated topics in our study of the Gita. One one hand, we studied techniques such as saankhya yoga, karma yoga, dhyaana yoga or meditation and bhakti yoga as techniques to access Ishvara. One the other hand, we came across the two- fold downfall of the Purusha, through ignorance of our true nature and subsequent attachment to the gunaas or qualities. In this shloka and the next, Shri Krishna methodically connects these seemingly unrelated topics.

Before we are ready to remove the ignorance of our true nature, we need to deal with our attachment to the three gunaas of Prakriti. In simple terms, we need to deal with our selfish desires. The technique of dealing with our selfish desires depends upon the capability of the seeker. Shri Krishna says that the most advanced seeker has mastered the technique of dhyaana yoga or meditation. They can directly contact the eternal essence “in the self through the self”, which means that they can access the eternal essence through their intellect. This topic was covered in the sixth chapter.

For those who do not have mastery over meditation, saankhya yoga or the yoga of discrimination is recommended. This was the topic of the second chapter. Here, the seeker has great command over their intellect. They can constantly separate the eternal essence from the three gunas, the Purusha from Prakriti, through viveka or discrimination. “The three gunaas, sattva, rajas and tamas are objects of my perception, I am their witness, eternal and distinct from them.” This is how they think all the time. Some commentators interpret the phrase “saankhya and yoga” to include “ashtanga yoga”, which is the technique of accessing Ishvara through yogic exercises and breathing.

For those who cannot practise saankhya yoga or ashtanga yoga, karma yoga, the yoga of selfless action, is recommended. This was the topic of the third chapter. Most of us fit into this category. When actions are performed with the idea of dedication to Ishvara, the mind is gradually purged of selfishness. Such a pure mind becomes ready to receive and internalize the knowledge of one’s true nature described in the present chapter.

As per Shrimad bhaagwad: “True knowledge is that which helps us develop love for God. The fulfilment of karma occurs when it is done for the pleasure of the Lord.”

Now, what happens if we cannot follow any of these techniques? Shri Krishna explains the simplest technique in the next shloka.

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Meaning:

But others, not knowing this, worship what they hear from others. Those who follow what they have heard, they too overcome death.

Explanation:

Whenever we want to learn something new, we do one of two things. We either listen to the advice of an expert, or read a book written by an expert. **We study their teachings, we put their teachings into practice. Slowly, we begin to understand what they are talking about, and someday, become an expert ourselves. All this becomes possible only when we have faith in the teacher, and when we diligently follow their instructions.** The forum in which

we obtain knowledge through contact with knowers of that which is the ultimate reality, the "sanga" with the "sat", is known as "satsanga".

Shri Krishna says that if we are not qualified to follow any of the techniques mentioned in the previous shloka - dhyaana, saankhya or karma yoga - we need not worry. We can obtain the same result of those techniques if we find a competent guru and diligently follow the path prescribed by them. Just hearing the teaching is not enough. If the doctor gives you a list of foods to avoid eating, you will not improve your health unless you follow their instructions. Similarly, we must become “shruti paraayanaha”, uphold the teachings as the ultimate goal of our lives. Satsanga should become an integral part of our lives.

In the Vedic tradition, hearing from the saints has been highly emphasized as a powerful tool for spiritual elevation. **In the Shreemad Bhagavatam, King Parikshit asked Shukadev the question: “How can we purify the undesirable entities in our hearts, such as lust, anger, greed, envy, hatred, etc.?” Shukadev replied:**

śhṛiṇvatāṁ sva- kathāṁ kṛiṣhṇaḥ, puṇya- śhravaṇa- kīrtanaḥ, hṛidy antaḥ stho hy abhadrāṇi, vidhunoti suhṛit satām (Bhagavatam 1.2.17)

“Parikshit! Simply hear the descriptions of the divine Names, Forms, Pastimes, Virtues, Abodes, and saints of God from a saint. This will naturally cleanse the heart of the unwanted dirt of endless lifetimes.”

So then, what is the result of those who follow this path? They will be able to overcome death, in other words, they will achieve liberation. Death does not just refer to the loss of the physical body. Every time we get fascinated by the material world and rush to act with selfish desires, we forget our true nature and take on the role of a doer, an experience, a meritorious actor or “puntyaatmaa” or a sinner. Each time we forget our true nature as the blissful eternal essence to rush out into the world and eventually experience sorrow, we “die” as it were. So therefore, Shri Krishna says that one who simply follows the instructions of their guru diligently will overcome death.

In these two shlokas, Shri Krishna covered the types of spiritual techniques required to access the Purusha within. He now begins a new topic in the next shloka.

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"yāvat sañjāyate kiñcit,
sattvaṁ sthāvara- jaṅgamam..□
kṣetra- kṣetrajña- saṁyogāt,
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Meaning:

Whatever being is born, inert or moving, know that to have come from the union of kshetra and kshetrajnya, O foremost among the Bharatas.

Explanation:

We now shift our attention from the nature of the “I” to the nature of the world. We may be able to experience our true nature as the saakshi, the witness, in deep meditation. But most of us still have to transact in this world, still deal with our friends, our relatives, our co-workers and so on. How should our attitude be towards the world after we have understood, at least in theory, what our true nature is? We cannot, and should not, think of ourselves as something special, and as everyone else as useless forms on an IMAX screen, per the

illustration used in previous shlokas. Now, in this sequence of shlokas, we learn to develop the right attitude, the right vision towards the world.

In the early twentieth century, Sir J.C. Bose established through experiments that even plants, which are non-moving life forms, can feel and respond to emotions. His experiments proved that soothing music can enhance the growth of plants. When a hunter shoots a bird sitting on a tree, the vibrations of the tree seem to indicate that it weeps for the bird. And when a loving gardener enters the garden, the trees feel joyous. The changes in the vibrations of the tree reveal that it also possesses consciousness and can experience semblances of emotions. These observations corroborate Shree Krishna's statement here that all life forms possess consciousness; they are the combination of the eternal soul, which is the source of consciousness, and the body, which is made of the insentient material energy.

Shri Krishna begins this topic by asserting that every other being in the universe has come into existence just like we have. The kshetrajnya, the higher aspect of Prakriti, has identified itself with the kshetra, the lower aspect of Prakriti. Each such erroneous identification creates the Purusha, also known as the jeeva, the individual soul. Subsequently, each Purusha has developed attachment to the qualities of Prakriti, accumulating selfish desires or karmas in the process. Billions of Purushas live out their lives in this world trying to exhaust their karmas, but in most cases, end up accumulating more karmas, and therefore, take birth again.

For preparation of living many doors are there, but for mōkṣa, there is only one door: jñānam. As it says darkness can be removed only by light. Krishna says because samsāra is caused by ignorance and error. I am the Puruṣaḥ, this fact I am ignorant. Puruṣah means Vēdāntic Puruṣa that is the four things we ought to remember: Cētana, nirguṇa, nirvikāra, sathya, cētana tatvam Puruṣah, purṇa Puruṣaḥ aham; this fact I am ignorant of. This is called the ignorance problem.

And this ignorance has led to an error; Puruṣah ajñānam (ignorance) has led to Prakṛ̥ti identification means abhimānam (ego). You miss the original and take the wrong one; called mis take. I miss the Puruṣah and take the Prakṛ̥ti as myself.

And because of the dēha abhimāna (body identification), puruṣah leads to problem of misunderstanding i.e. I the immortal Puruṣah mistake myself to be the mortal body. And therefore apūrṇathvam (incompleteness) leads to kāma(desire); kāma leads to karma(work), karma leads to puṇya pāpam, puṇya pāpa leads to sukha duḥkha (sorrow and happiness), and later to punar janma (reincarnation). Infect entire cycle of birth and death is dēha abhimāna. Every living being is born; goes through the cycles of births and death. The only way to come out from the problem is gyanam.

We have spoken of this erroneous identification several times but have not delved into it deeply. The classic example to explain this erroneous identification is that of a burning hot iron ball. The iron ball has taken on heat, which is the property of fire. On the other hand, fire which is normally without shape, has taken on the property of the iron ball, which is round. Two things taking on each other's properties is known as "anyonya adhyaasa" or mutual superimposition. The Purusha's real nature is infinite, full of knowledge and bliss. Prakriti's nature is finite, inert and sorrowful. Erroneous identification results in them exchanging their properties, as it were. This is how the Purusha assumes inertness of the body.

So, our daily life is nothing but a Purusha interacting with several other Purushas, all of which are under the effect of this erroneous identification. There should be no hint of any arrogance that causes us to treat others differently just because we think that we have acquired more knowledge than them. In fact, whenever we emphasize differences between one another rather than similarities, even in worldly matters, we slip further away from liberation. But, developing an attitude of sameness towards everyone becomes difficult, especially when our minds are conditioned to differentiate rather than unify. Keeping this in mind, we learn to develop the correct attitude towards the world in the next shloka.

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Meaning:

He who sees the supreme lord established equally in all beings, as the imperishable within the perishable, he sees (correctly).

Explanation:

Shree Krishna had previously used the expression yaḥ paśhyati sa paśhyati (they alone truly see, who see that…) Now He states that it is not enough to see the presence of the soul within the body. We must also appreciate that God, the Supreme Soul, is seated within all bodies. His presence in the heart of all living beings was previously stated in verse 13.23 in this chapter. It is also mentioned in verses 10.20 and 18.61 of the Bhagavad Gita, and in other Vedic scriptures as well:

“God is one. He resides in the hearts of all living beings. He is omnipresent. He is the Supreme Soul of all souls.” (Śhwetāśhvatar Upaniṣhad 6.11)

“God is seated inside all living beings as the Witness and the Master.” (Bhagavatam 10.86.31)

“The Supreme Lord Ram is eternal and beyond everything. He resides in the hearts of all living entities.” (Ramayan)

The Supreme Soul accompanies the individual soul as it journeys from body to body in the cycle of life and death.

When a nation is fighting for its independence from an invader, freedom fighters always urge the citizens to emphasize that which is common among them and de-emphasize that which is different. In India, freedom fighters had to urge its citizens to overcome their differences of region and religion and emphasize the idea of a united Indian nation. Unless the citizens stopped identifying themselves with a certain region/religion and started identifying themselves as Indians, there was no chance of India gaining independence.

Similarly, all of us tend to focus on each other’s physical appearances, words, ideas, thoughts, all of which are fundamentally perishable and transient. Shri Krishna urges us to develop and attitude where we shift our focus from the perishable to the imperishable. In other words, we learn to see the imperishable Ishvara in everybody and everything, including ourselves. We saw earlier that everything and every being is a combination of the kshetra and the kshetrajnya. We now stop identifying with the imperishable kshetra and start identifying with the imperishable kshetrajnya, which is Ishvara himself.

So then, this is the correct attitude, the correct vision, that we should develop. We are a product of Ishvara and Prakriti; therefore, we should identify with the Ishvara aspect as our self, our "I". In parallel, everything and everyone is also a product of Ishvara and Prakriti, therefore we should emphasize the Ishvara aspect which is present in everyone equally. We will come to the conclusion that the Ishvara aspect in us is the same as the Ishvara aspect in everyone else. Shri Krishna says that one who develops such a vision, one who sees the imperishable in the perishable, he truly sees, not anyone else.

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"samaḿ paśyan hi sarvatra,
samavasthitam īśvaram..□
na hinasty ātmanātmānaḿ,
tato yāti parāḿ gatim"..□□

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Meaning:

For, he who sees Ishvara established equally everywhere, does not kill his self by his own self. That is why he attains the supreme state.

Explanation:

Shri Krishna explains the result of developing an equanimous vision in this shloka. He says that one who sees Ishvara residing equally in everything and everyone, including himself, does not harm or kill his self by his own self. He says that we commit a kind of suicide whenever we do not focus on the imperishable and give too much importance to the perishable. We would very rarely get the urge to commit suicide. So how does this happen?

The mind is pleasure seeking by nature and being a product of the material energy, is spontaneously inclined to material pleasures. If we follow the inclinations of our mind, we become degraded into deeper and deeper material consciousness. The way to prevent this downslide is to keep the mind in check with the help of the intellect. For this, the intellect needs to be empowered with true knowledge.

Whenever our body's weight increases or decreases, we say "I am fat, I am thin". Whenever our body falls ill and recovers, we say "I am sick, I am healthy". Whenever our body is injured and healed, we say "I am injured, I am healed". We have taken on changes that happen to a mass of flesh and bones as our own changes. By repeatedly taking on this identification to the body due to ignorance of our true nature, we get stuck in an endless cycle of desire, action, birth and death. This entry into the cycle of birth and death is referred to as "killing of one's self by one's own self".

Shri Krishna says that we need to develop samadarshanam, the vision of seeing the imperishable Ishvara in the perishable world. We need to stop identifying with the body, which is not ours to begin with. It belongs to the five elements that make up the universe and will go back to them when it has run its course. We should identify with Ishvara who exists equally in us and in other beings. When we recognize that the Ishvara in us is the same Ishvara in everyone, we will attain the most supreme, the purest state of Ishvara which is the state of brahman, the eternal essence. The instant we realize our identity with brahman, we attain liberation or moksha.

Those, who learn to see God as the Supreme Soul present in all beings, begin to live by this knowledge. They no longer seek personal gain and enjoyment in their relationships with others. They neither get attached to others for the good done by them, nor hate them for any harm caused by them. Rather, seeing everyone as a part of God, they maintain a healthy attitude of respect and service toward others. They naturally refrain from mistreating, cheating, or insulting others, when they perceive in them the presence of God. Also, the humanly created distinctions of nationality, creed, caste, sex, status, and color, all become irrelevant. Thus, they elevate their mind by seeing God in all living beings, and finally reach the supreme goal.

We have seen how to attach ourselves to Ishvara, how to identify ourselves with Ishvara in these shlokas. We also need to detach ourselves from Prakriti. We shall see how to do this in the next two shlokas.

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"prakṛtyaiva ca karmāṇi,
kriyamāṇāni sarvaśaḥ..□
yaḥ paśyati tathātmānam,
akartāraṁ sa paśyati"..□□

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Meaning:

One who sees all actions as performed by Prakriti alone, and the self as actionless, he sees (clearly).

Explanation:

The Tantra Bhāgavat states: ahankārāt tu samsāro bhavet jīvasya na svataḥ "The ego of being the body and the pride of being the doer trap the soul in the samsara of life and death." In material consciousness, the ego makes us identify with the body, and thus we attribute the actions of the body to the soul, and think, "I am doing this…I am doing that." But the enlightened soul perceives that while eating, drinking, talking, walking, etc. it is only the body that acts.

Maharishi Vasishth instructed Ram: kartā bahirkartāntarloke vihara rāghava (Yog Vāsiṣhṭh) "Ram, while working, externally exert Yourself as if the results depend upon You; but internally, realize Yourself to be the non-doer."

Imagine that a toddler sees a phone for the first time. He is fascinated each time it rings, and mistakenly thinks that by raising his hand, he makes the phone ring. But, if an adult has a never- ending fascination with a phone ringing, or has a mistaken notion about why it rings, we will think that there is something wrong with him. If an adult is overly fascinated by machines, it is because he lets the three gunaas of Prakriti still entice him, attract him. In general, once we know how a machine works, we are not overly fascinated or concerned with it.

Shri Krishna says that one who has truly assimilated the teaching of the Gita knows that actions, reactions, emotions, thought, logic, all these happen in the realm of Prakriti. Just like we lose fascination for machines once we know how they work, we should gradually stop being fascinated by Prakriti which is nothing but a machine that belongs to Ishvara. If this understanding seeps in, the shocks of world that we face daily will slowly lose their ability to shake us. We will perform our duties with our full attention and dedication so that we can exhaust our selfish desires but leave the reactions and results to Ishvara because it is all happening in his Prakriti, his machine.

How do we go about doing this? The path to reduce our fascination with Prakriti is to increase our fascination with Ishvara. We do this by hearing stories of Ishvara, by attending satsanga, by associating with people who are devotees of Ishvara. The Gita itself contains chapters on the glory of Ishvara's vibhootis, which can be read as daily meditations. Eventually, we begin to see the entire universe as part of Ishvara's vishvaroopa, his universal form.

By virtue of these two shloks we understand three benefits from Knowledge i.e. first one is sama darshana means equanimity, second is amruthathva prapthi means immortality and

now third is prayojanam akartrtva prapthi means non doer ship of any work, which is done through me. It makes me free from any kind of attachment of fruit of any work.

Now, even if we develop detachment towards the actions of Prakriti, our senses still get fascinated by variety, colour, form, diversity created by it. How do we deal with this aspect of Prakriti? Shri Krishna covers this next.

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"yadā bhūta- pṛthag- bhāvam,
eka- stham anupaśyati..□
tata eva ca vistāraṁ,
brahma sampadyate tadā"..□□

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Meaning:

When he realizes that the variety of beings is established in the one, and it is only an evolution of that (one), he then attains brahman.

Explanation:

The ocean modifies itself in many forms such as the wave, froth, tide, ripples, etc. One who is shown all these individually for the first time may conclude that they are all different. But one who has knowledge of the ocean sees the inherent unity in all the variety. Similarly, there are numerous forms of life in existence, from the tiniest amoeba to the most powerful celestial gods. All of them are rooted in the same reality—the soul, which is a part of God, seated in a body, which is made from the material energy. The distinctions between the forms are not due to the soul, but due to the different bodies manifested by the material energy. Upon birth, the bodies of all living beings are created from the material energy, and at death, their bodies again merge into it. When we see the variety of living beings all rooted in the same material nature, we realize the unity behind the diversity. And since material nature is the energy of God, such an understanding makes us see the same spiritual substratum pervading all existence. This leads to the Brahman realization.

Let us take another example. We came across the toddler who was fascinated by the phone ringing in the previous shloka's discussion. Imagine that the same toddler sees a traffic signal

for the first time. The signal turns bright red, then green, then orange. Sometimes, the orange light flashes for a few seconds. Sometimes it shows a left arrow, sometimes a right arrow. While the toddler is bewildered by the diversity of colours and lights generated by the traffic signal, we as adults are no longer fascinated by it. We know that the basis of the diversity is 3 bulbs, and some electronic circuit that switches these bulbs on and off.

Similarly, one who knows the workings of Prakriti knows that the whole universe is nothing but a play of the three gunaas or qualities of Prakriti. Inert substances have tamasic predominance. Movement is caused by rajasic predominance. Intelligence is caused by saatvic predominance. These three gunaas are the building blocks of the variety we see in the universe, and it is these three gunaas that have been evolving, changing, combining with each other throughout the timeline of the universe. This Prakriti, the three gunaas, is nothing but a power of Ishvara himself.

So then, how do we reduce our fascination for the three gunaas? Our attitude should be as follows. The variety of the universe, everything that I see, is a product of the three gunaas of Prakriti. This Prakriti is a machine, a mechanism that has been set in motion by Ishvara. But I also know that Ishvara in his purest form is infinite and all-pervading, and that he resides in everyone as the “I”, the self. Therefore, all of this variety and diversity is just an upaadhi, a conditioning of the self. When I see diversity, I am only seeing Ishvara, the self of all.

If we are able to develop this kind of attitude, this kind of knowledge, and stay rooted in it, we will shift our focus to Ishvara who is constant, and not the diversity of Prakriti that is ever changing. We will then attain unity with the eternal essence, with brahman, and achieve liberation.

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[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] 13.31[illegible]

[illegible] **13.32**[illegible]

[illegible]

"anāditvān nirguṇatvāt,
paramātmāyam avyayaḥ..[illegible]
śarīra- stho 'pi kaunteya,
na karoti na lipyate"..[illegible]

[illegible]**:**

[illegible]

Meaning:

Without beginning, without qualities, this supreme self is indestructible. Though residing in the body, O Kaunteya, it neither acts nor is tainted.

Explanation:

As this chapter slowly comes to a close, Shri Krishna begins to describe the nature of the supreme self. Since this chapter gives prominence to logic, more so than any other chapter in the Gita, he wants to clear any doubts or misconceptions that we may harbour about the supreme self. The first doubt we may have is as follows. If Prakriti is without beginning, and the supreme self is also without beginning, what makes them different?

After describing the Supreme Soul, the soul, and the material nature of the living beings, Shree Krishna explains which of these is responsible for their actions. Also, who is responsible for the cause and effect in the universe at large. Those who understand these differences and identify the correct causes of actions; are the ones who see the ultimate truth; and are situated in knowledge. They do not degrade themselves by the illusions of their minds and perceive the presence of the Supreme Soul in every living being. In the same material nature, they can identify a variety of living beings and look at all existence pervaded by a common spiritual substratum. With this knowledge, they attain consciousness of the Brahman or God- realization.

He calls the feelings, sentiments, emotions, etc., that arise in this field (body) as modifications, and the virtues and pious good qualities purify the field and illuminate it with knowledge. This knowledge helps us realize and understand the existence of our soul, which is the kṣhetrajña or the knower of the field. Shree Krishna then starts describing God, the supreme knower of the fields of all living creatures. He says that the Supreme Lord possesses opposite attributes at the same time, which seem contradictory. Understand that God is all-pervading in His creation, yet He sits in the heart of every living being

The Buddha taught: “All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, and it is made of our thoughts.” Thus, as we think, that is what we become. The great American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson said: “The ancestor of every action is a thought.” Therefore, it is necessary to cultivate appropriate thoughts and actions in the field of our body. For this, we should be able to differentiate between kṣhetra, the field, and kṣhetrajña, the knower of the field.

Shri Krishna says that the difference is cause by whether or not they have gunaas or qualities. So far, we have seen that Prakriti is nothing but the three gunaas of sattva, rajas and tamas. But the supreme self is “nirguna”, it has no association or association with any quality whatsoever. This is what makes it different than Prakriti. Also, Prakriti is constantly changing and perishing whereas the supreme self is imperishable. When something has association with qualities, like the human body has strength, it is bound to perish or decay.

Since the supreme self has no qualities at all, it is imperishable. Prakriti, on the other hand, is every changing and perishable.

Another doubt is as follows. Does the supreme self-get affected by the actions and reactions of Prakriti? Shri Krishna asserts that it does not. We have seen that the supreme self, due to ignorance, identifies itself with a body, a product of Prakriti. This is what is referred to in this shloka - it “resides” in the body. We have also repeatedly heard that the supreme self has nothing to do with Prakriti. It can never become the doer or the enjoyer of any actions. But due to the apparent identification with the body, the supreme self assumes that it is a doer and enjoyer. Since the identification is fake, not real, the supreme self can never get affected by the actions and reactions by Prakriti.

We may have understood the non-doer ship and non-enjoyer ship of the supreme self in theory, but it is still a little fuzzy. We need to clearly understand how the supreme self, in its real nature neither acts, nor experiences the results of its actions. To better explain this, Shri Krishna provides an illustration in the next shloka.

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Meaning:

Just as all-pervading space, being subtle, is not tainted, so is the self, situated everywhere in any body, not tainted.

Explanation:

Many scriptures, including the Srimad Bhagavatam, describe the creation of the five great elements. Space was created first, followed by air, fire, water and then earth, each more tangible and visible than the one preceding it. Space, therefore, is the subtlest of elements. Its main property is indivisibility. We may put up walls and differentiate "my room" from "your room", but the wall does not actually divide space at all. The wall is an upaadhi, something that mentally limits space, but cannot ever limit space in reality.

Another property of space that it is unaffected by whatever it contains. You can throw dust, water, glue, perfume, odour, anything at all into space, yet it remains unaffected. The air in a room may get affected by perfume or odour, not space. But more fundamentally, space provides existence to everything. Without space, no object can ever exist.

Shri Krishna says that the self is similar to space in these aspects. Like space is as though divided into rooms, the self is one but appears as though residing differently in different bodies. Like space never gets tainted by whatever is thrown at it, the self never gets impacted by the results, reactions, experiences and consequences of any action. All actions and reactions stay in the realm of Prakriti. And when we say statements like "this pot is round", we should note that we cannot use the word "is" without realizing that the "is" is the "sat" or existence aspect of the self.

The soul experiences sleep, waking, tiredness, refreshment, etc., due to the ego that makes it identify with the body. One may ask why changes in the body in which it resides do not taint the soul. Shree Krishna explains it with the example of space. It holds everything, but yet remains unaffected, because it is subtler than the gross objects it holds. Similarly, the soul is a subtler energy. It retains Its divinity even while It identifies with the material body.

In the previous chapter, we were understanding the jeev is mixture of nature and Purusha (soul) in practice. In a compound, when an element merges its characteristics with other elements and forms a new element, then its original qualities are lost. But in a mixture, the original qualities of the element remain. Hence, the original qualities of the soul i.e. Purusha remain in the living being. These original qualities have been compared with the worldly sky and light. These are the original qualities.

1. Purusha is omnipresent.

2. It is formless.

3. It is detached.

We can say this by looking at the cinema screen that the screen remains detached from any scene, emotion or excitement etc. of the entire movie.

4. It is unbroken even though it is seen in many parts. Subtract, add, divide or multiply the whole from the whole. The whole remains unbroken.

5. It is without any change.

6. It is the base element of the entire creation.

7. It is subtle and unmanifest. Therefore, whatever the living being sees, thinks or does due to the union of man and nature, it is not man who does it but nature, man is merely the witness.

How should we bring this teaching into our life? Ultimately, all of us are craving for independence of one form or the other. For instance, the incessant drive to earn more wealth is towards gaining financial independence. Shri Krishna says that once we know that the self in us, the "I" in us is totally unaffected by any reaction or experience of the world, we will gain the highest and utmost level of independence, which is moksha or liberation. We just have to work at removing the ignorance of our true nature, which can only happen if we disassociate from Prakriti and associate with Ishvara.

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"yathā prakāśayaty ekaḥ,
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Meaning:

Just as the one sun illumines the entire world, so does the knower of the field illumine the entire field, O Bhaarata.

Explanation:

The example of space in the previous shloka was meant to illustrate the unaffected and untainted nature of the self. In this shloka, the example of the sun is given to highlight the actionless nature of the self. The sun is located millions of miles away from the earth, yet it enables life on earth to exist. Minerals, plants, animals and humans, everything and every being survives only from the sun's energy. But the sun never acts. All of the actions happen on our planet distinct and separate from the sun.

Shri Krishna says that the self in us, the "I" in us is similar in nature to the sun. The self or the knower of the field, the kshetrajnya, illumines or knows the actions taking place in the kshetra, the field, our body, which is a part of Prakriti. Furthermore, the self does not take on the notion of pride or doer ship in the actions of the body, neither does it get differentiated due to the differences or modifications of Prakriti, just like the sun never claims doership nor gets differentiated due to the variety of form on our planet.

Although the soul energizes the entire body in which it is present with consciousness, yet by itself, it is exceedingly small. eṣho 'ṇurātmā (Muṇḍakopaniṣhad 3.1.9) "The soul is very tiny in size." The Śhwetāśhvatar Upaniṣhad states:

"If we divide the tip of a hair into a hundred parts, and then divide each part into further hundred parts, we will get the size of the soul. These souls are innumerable in number." This is a manner of expressing the minuteness of the soul.

How can such an infinitesimal soul energize the body, which is huge in comparison? Shree Krishna explains this with the analogy of the sun. Although situated in one place, the sun illumines the entire solar system with its light. Likewise, the Vedānt Darśhan states:

“The soul, although seated in the heart spreads its consciousness throughout the field of the body.”

So, if the self is the sole knower of all of the actions in our body, how does our intellect know things? With respect to the analogy of the sun, the intellect can be compared to a pool of water that reflects the light of the sun. The intellect is just an instrument that functions due to tje knowledge of the self. If the intellect is calm and steady, it works perfectly in interpreting the information sent to it from the mind and senses. If it is agitated or dull, it cannot work perfectly, just like the sun’s reflection is disturbed when the pool of water is agitated or muddy.

Here, Shri Krishna asserts that the self is of the nature of "chit". It is knowledge, awareness, consciousness personified.

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Meaning:

Those who, by the eye of wisdom, perceive the distinction between the field and its knower in this manner, and relinquishment from the cause of all beings, they attain the supreme.

Explanation:

After having understood the true nature of the self, the nature of the ignorance we are in, and also having understood the method of how to remove this ignorance, what is the result? Shri Krishna concludes this chapter by asserting that the one who has removed his ignorance through knowledge attain the supreme, which is moksha or liberation from the cycle of Prakriti's creation and dissolution. The key to understanding this chapter is "viveka", or discrimination, which was hinted at the beginning of this chapter by the words "idam shareera" or "this body".

True knowledge is to know the distinction between the material kṣhetra (field of activity) and the spiritual kṣhetrajña (knower of the field). Those possessing such discriminative knowledge do not look upon themselves as the material body. They identify with their spiritual nature as souls and tiny parts of God. Hence, they seek the path of spiritual elevation and release from material nature. Then, by treading on the path of spiritual enlightenment, such persons of wisdom attain their ultimate goal of God- realization.

One is cētanam, another is acētanam; sentient; and insentient; one is nirguṇam another is saguṇam; one is attributeless; the other is attributed; one is means which one; consciousness is attributeless; matter is attributed. Nirvikāram- Savikāram, Consciousness is changeless; matter is ever changing.

And Krishna wants to emphasise the fourth difference in this sloka, which is the most important and technical difference.

Cētanam- acētanam, nirguṇam- saguṇam, Nirvikāram- Savikāram and fourth is Sathyam and mithya.

Consciousness alone exists independently; matter cannot exist independently. So consciousness has got intrinsic existence; matter has got only borrowed existence. Just as the cinema screen exists independent of the movie; but movie characters cannot exist, independent of the screen.

Take the case of a forensic investigator who is hired to detect counterfeit currency notes. On the first day of his job, he will not be able to spot the difference between a fake note and a genuine note. After learning about the visual differences between what's fake and what's genuine, and after practising to spot those differences over a period of time, his eye will

begin to see minute details that the average eye cannot see. This ability to separate the real from the unreal is discrimination, which is the “eye of wisdom” mentioned in the shloka.

So then, the one who knows how to conduct his life in a manner such that he can distinguish between the unreal aspects and the real aspects, between the field and its knower, between Purusha and Prakriti, and learn to see the imperishable in the perishable as Ishvara, such a person is freed of the mechanisms of Prakriti, the cause of all beings. This is the goal of jnyaana yoga, which is summarized in the thirteenth chapter of the Gita. We will be able to attain this goal if we bring this teaching into our lives through constant reflection and meditation.

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Meaning:

Thus ends the thirteenth chapter called kṣētra kṣētrajña vibhāga yōga or Prakṛti Puruṣa yoga.

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Summary of Bhagvad Gita Chapter 13:

Shri Krishna begins the chapter by describing what is meant by the field and the knower of the field, kshetra and kshetrajnya. He reminds us that this knowledge is not something new, that it has come directly from the Vedas and the Brahma Sutras. He then describes the field in detail by listing its modifications such as the great elements, the ego, the senses and so on. A list of attributes or qualities that are needed in order to escape the influence of the field is given. These qualities include humility, lack of arrogance and so on. These qualities are termed as "jnyaanam" or means of knowledge.

The topic of the supreme self, brahman, the knower of the field or kshetrajnya, is taken up next. The "sat" or existence aspect of brahman is indicated first with attributes such as hands, legs and so on. It is then indicated with negation of those same attributes, following the "adhyaaropa apavaada" technique used in Vedanta. Brahman, which can never become an object of our knowledge, is explained through a series of paradoxes - it is near, yet it is far and so on. The "chit" or awareness aspect of brahman is also highlighted using the phrase "it is the light of all lights".

The field and its knower are now explained from the point of view of the individualized self, jeeva by using the terminology of Purusha and Prakriti. Shri Krishna first defines these terms, points out their beginningless nature, and also points out how they become the cause of enjoyership and doership respectively. The fall of the immaculate supreme self is explained by the apparent relationship of Purusha and Prakriti due to ignorance of our true nature as the supreme self that resides as Ishvara in all bodies. Release from this ignorance leads to liberation.

In order to get to a stage where we can discriminate or distinguish between the field and its knower, we have to go through a curriculum of saadhanaa or spiritual practice. Shri Krishna provides this roadmap of steps as karma, bhakti, raaja and saankhya yoga. The key thing, however, is to orient or attach us to the imperishable Ishvara, and to detach ourselves from identification with Prakriti, which is the storehouse of all action and diversity.

Shri Krishna concludes the chapter with two illustrations highlighting the existence and awareness, the sat and chit aspects of the supreme self. The analogy of space is used to illustrate the all- pervading, unattached, untainted and singular nature of the supreme self.

The analogy of the sun is used to illustrate the knowledge, awareness and non- acting nature of the supreme self. The chapter ends by asserting that the fruit of knowing the true nature of the supreme self is moksha or liberation.

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