

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 13: Kṣetra-Kṣetrajña-Vibhāga-Yoga

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The Field and the Knower of the Field

The **13th Chapter** of the Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā is **Kṣetra-kṣetrajña Vibhāga Yoga - Yoga of Discrimination between the Field and the Knower of the Field.**

The Vivechan session began with the lighting of the lamp and offering of prayers to Bhagavān Sri Krishna, Ma Sharada and Swamiji .

When we say that we are the followers of the Gitā, we should take a moment to appreciate ourselves for our success in managing to be a part of this beautiful and enlightening journey that has made our lives infinitely worthwhile. The 13th Chapter has got its own Grace as it makes us dive into greater depths of divine knowledge.

Srimad Bhagavad Gītā, comprising eighteen chapters, can be divided into 3 parts. The first 6 chapters are Action oriented or **karma Pradhana**, the second set of chapters from 7th to 11th Chapters focus on devotion or Bhakti, while the 3rd part that begins from the 13th Chapter is Knowledge centric or **Jnāna Pradhana**.

There is often a confusion in the minds of the students of Gitā regarding the number of shlokas in the holy text. Do we take the Gitā to comprise 700 or 701 shlokas? There are various schools of thought claiming that the thirteenth chapter starts with a question posed by Arjuna. **We, in the Geeta Pariwar comply with the research done by the Gitā Press, which bases its study of the holy text on the Shankara Bhāsyā or the teaching of Gitā advocated by Adi Shankaracharya ji**, and which omits the question asked by Arjuna. Our Swamiji always says that the bhakti mentioned in the Gitā is **jnāna-adhishthit bhakti**, that is, devotion tinged heavily with knowledge. The very foundation of the Gitā is enshrined upon knowledge.

A question may well arise, as to how this sacred journey evolved from knowledge? In the 11th chapter, Sri Krishna has said in conclusion :

मत्-कर्म-कृन् मत्-परमो मद्-भक्तः सङ्ग-वर्जितः ।
निर्वैरः सर्व-भूतेषु यः स माम् एति पाण्डव ॥ 55 ॥

(Those who perform all their duties for My sake, who depend upon Me and are devoted to Me, who are free from attachment, and are without malice toward all beings, such devotees certainly come to Me.)

In the next chapter, that is the 12th chapter, Arjuna has asked who among the devotees are HIS favorite, referring to the two classifications of devotion- the **Nirguna and Saguna** Bhakti. Nirguna bhakti means devotion towards the divine power that is present everywhere, even though not visible to *ordinary* mortals. On the other hand, Saguna bhakti refers to worship of the divine in different forms such as Sri Ram, Sri Krishna or Ma Durga. **In response to Arjuna's query Parameshwar says that those who are devoted and dedicated to HIM are HIS favorite.** However, Paramātma also says that Nirguna bhakti is difficult and painful as it is an arduous task to fix the fleeting mind on something which is not visibly manifest.

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस् तेषाम् अव्यक्तासक्त-चेतसाम् ।
अव्यक्ता हि गतिर् दुःखं देहवद्भिर् अवाप्यते ॥ 5 ॥

(For those whose minds are attached to the unmanifest, the path of realization is full of tribulations. Worship of the unmanifest is exceedingly difficult for embodied beings.)

HE also lists a number of qualities which, if a devotee is equipped with, would endear him to Sri Krishna. Going beyond these qualities, Ishwar goes on to say in the subsequent chapters that **devotion entails a deeper understanding of knowledge.** This is when Yogeshwar introduces two terms, **Kśetra and kṣetrajña**. Understanding the relationship between these two terms is the real knowledge that would take one gradually towards devotion. The 13th chapter starts with a deeper understanding of the bond between **Kśetra** and **kṣetrajña**.

13.1

śrībhagavān uvāca
idaṃ(m) śarīraṃ(ñ) kaunteya, kṣetramityabhidhīyate,
etadyo vetti taṃ(m) prāhuḥ(kh), kṣetrajña iti tadvidaḥ, 13.1

Śrī Bhagavān said:

This body Arjuna, is termed as the Field (kṣetra) and he knows it, is called the knower of the field (kṣetrajña) by the sages discerning the truth about both.

In this shloka, Parameshwar introduces the terms **Kśetra and kṣetrajña**. In our common everyday language, **Kśetra** means field. Here in this chapter, the word refers to the body or **śarīraṃ**.

When we say, 'I am so and so', we identify with the bodies. That is why, instead of saying, 'We are the bodies of so and so', we just introduce ourselves by our names, thus indicating that we are the bodies that house our souls. However, when Sri Krishna says **idaṃ śarīraṃ**, HE gives a third person, objective perspective to the body, **pointing at the clearly marked distinction between the body and the soul within, or the true self.** The body or **śarīraṃ**, is that which constantly undergoes a change and eventually deteriorates, and therefore the 'self' cannot surely be just the body. **One who knows this body as the separate entity or śarīraṃ, is the knower or the kṣetrajña.**

In the Sanskrit language, '**jña**' is a suffix attached to the knower. For example, the knower of **Ganit** or Mathematics is **Ganitajña** and the knower of music or **sangit** is **sangitajña**. Similarly, **Ishwar is sarvajña or knower of all.** In the next shloka, Yogeshwar elaborates on the meaning of the word **kṣetrajña**.

13.2

kṣetrajñam(ñ) cāpi mām(m) viddhi, sarVākṣetreṣu bhārata, kṣetrakṣetrajñayorjñānam(m), yattajñānam(m) mataṃ(m) mama. 13.2

Know Myself to be the kṣetrajna (individual soul) in all the kṣetras (fields), Arjuna. And it is the knowledge of the field (kṣetra), and knower (kṣetrajna), (ie. of Matter with its evolutes and the Spirit) which I consider as true knowledge.

In this shloka, there are important words to be considered- **kṣetrajñam cāpi mām viddhi**, which means, Sri Krishna is the Knower of all the fields. HE is the eternal divine power or the **kṣetrajña**. In a lighter vein, we may say that HE has further given us HIS address. HE resides in **sarvākṣetreṣu**, that is, in all the fields of activities and in all the living creatures. This shloka gives a distinct definition of knowledge, as that which comprehends the bond between the field and the knower. There is another important word in this shloka, namely, **jñāna** which is considered the very foundation of bhakti. Knowledge has been given an exalted position throughout the Gitā. In chapter 4 HE has said,

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।

तत्स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति ॥ 38॥

(In this world, there is nothing as purifying as divine knowledge. One who has attained purity of mind through prolonged practice of Yoga, receives such knowledge within the heart, in due course of time.)

Through **Adhyātma Vidya** or knowledge of the self, HE is leading us to the purest, the most pious and the highest level of devotion or bhakti. There are two more terms we need to understand in order to absorb this knowledge at a deeper level: **Prakṛti and Puruṣa**. Whatever we see around us, constitutes **Prakṛti** which does not exist in isolation and would be incomprehensible to its own self! It is like the devices we use, which do not have the ability to understand themselves. To get an insight into the complexity of the devices, we need another tattva referred to as the **Puruṣa**, that sees all and understands all. **The universe is a union of Prakṛti and Puruṣa.**

Let us take a simple example of our laptops. Unless the electricity flows through the system, the laptops would not work. Extending this analogy to the field of all existence, we can say that the **Puruṣa tattva is like the electricity which brings Prakṛti to life.** As mentioned before, **grasping the implication of the terms Kṣetra and kṣetrajña, and understanding the dynamics of Prakṛti and Puruṣa is true jñāna.** Of course, doctors or engineers are also deemed knowledgeable in their respective fields. However, their knowledge is limited in scope, serving a purpose only as long as they are alive. On the other hand, **this divine knowledge has no expiry date and helps us even after death.**

13.3

tatkṣetraṃ(m) yacca yādṛkca, yadvikāri yataśca yat, sa ca yo yatprabhāvaśca, tatsamāsenā me śṛṇu 13.3

What that Field (kṣetra) is and what is its nature, what are its modifications, and from what causes what effects have arisen, and also who its knower (kṣetrajna) is, and what is His glory - hear all this from Me in brief.

Sri Krishna tells Arjuna to listen to HIM carefully, as HE will give Arjuna this knowledge about the Kṣetra and its nature, so that Arjuna may attain liberation. Whenever HE uses the word **śṛṇu**, it implies **that we**

have to pay close heed to HIS words! In this shloka Paramātmā explains the nuances of the word **Kṣetra**, what forms it takes, what kinds of modification it undergoes, what are its properties and what are the causes out of which it has originated.

When we plan to buy a plot of land, do we not scrutinize the size, location, the properties and the modifications that have been brought about in this land? Besides getting information on these details, we also try to find out the antecedents of the land. Who owned this land? From whom did the present seller buy this plot of land? **In the subsequent shlokas, Sri Krishna gives us the 'old records' or the history of Kṣetra.**

13.4

ṛṣibhirbahudhā gītaṃ(ñ), chandobhirvidhaiḥ(ph) pṛthak, brahmasūtrapadaīścaiva, hetumadbhirviniścitaḥ 13.4

The truth, about the kṣetra and kṣetrajna, has been expounded by the seers in manifold ways; again it has been stated separately in different Vedic chants and also in the conclusive and reasoned texts of the Brahmasūtras.

The knowledge of Kṣetra and kṣetrajña has been documented extensively by our Rishis and Munis who, through different kinds of hymns, have sung these paeans in praise of the Almighty. They have also penned their research in great detail in the scriptures like the Brahmāsūtra and the ūpanishads, giving graphic description of the Kṣetra and kṣetrajña, and analyzing these concepts in ways that are far beyond the scope of any scholar in the history of civilization. Whereas the modern day scientist has based his research of the human body on the MRIs and CT Scans, the ancient sages have explored the various subtle levels of the body such as the **Annamaya-kosh** (physical layer), **Prāṇamaya-kosh** (vital energy layer), **Manomaya-kosh** (mental layer), **Vijñanamaya-kosh** (intellectual layer), and **Anandamaya-kosh** (blissful layer), within which resides the consciousness or **kṣetrajña**. **The Rishis had reached the Anandmayi kosh of bliss and hence their knowledge was extremely deep and profound.**

Sri Krishna says that this knowledge, already mentioned in the **Brahmāsūtras**, will be briefly explained by HIM in the subsequent shlokas. There are 555 Brahmasūtras which deal in great elaboration with these aforementioned concepts. We need to dive deeper to understand how this Kṣetra originated through Prakṛti and how we have evolved through the various processes of **Prakṛti**. In the present times, we attribute our origin to our forefathers. **However, our scriptures have gone beyond the human lineage and have examined our inception at a much deeper level.**

13.5

mahābhūtānyahaṅkāro, buddhiravyaktameva ca, indriyāṇi daśaikaṃ(ñ) ca, pañca cendriyagocarāḥ. 13.5

The five elements, the ego, the intellect, the unmanifest (Primordial Matter), the ten organs of perception and action, the mind and five objects of sense (sound, touch, colour, taste and smell).

In this shloka, Paramātmā explains the origin of the **Kṣetra** and how all the living creatures come into existence. HE uses the term **Mahābhūtānya** to describe the role of the five elements that combine to form creation. These five elements are: **Prithvi (Earth), Jal (Water), Agni (Fire), Vayu (Air), and Akasha (Ether)**. Since we are level 4 students, we need to go beyond these five elements to get a deeper understanding of the origin of **Kṣetra**, by studying the spiritual aspect as well. A term used to describe the

dynamics behind these five elements is **Pancikarana**, which refers to the process by which the elements come together. This knowledge is a crucial aspect of **Adhyātma**. Ram Dass ji says that we have to understand the procedure behind Pancikarana and thereby appreciate the fact that **the holy Gitā does not just deal with spirituality, but also explains it scientifically to illustrate the evolution of this nature**. The five elements combine and lead to creation of Srishti or the field of existence. These five elements cannot exist independently in isolation. **They become visible to us only if they combine through the process of Pancikarana**. For example, Air cannot be felt unless it is combined with water. Water in itself has air, space, and some physical particles but a major part of it is water. Similarly, Prithvi tattva has all the five elements though the consistency of Prithivi tattva is 50% or more. Thus, by the process of Pancikarana this entire universe gets created. In a nutshell, **the elements are known by the dominant constituent even though they cannot exist independently from the other elements**.

Along with these elements come the subtle attributes that are not visible to the eye but nevertheless play a role in the process of creation. **Ahaṅkāro** is one such attribute that originates from the process of **Pancikarana**. It is the subtle aspect of creation, which is not to be taken as ego, but as the realization of 'I'. The term comes from two words, **Ahañ and Kru** meaning 'me' and 'knowing' respectively. **Just like the moon remains in existence even when it is not visible during the Amavasya, similarly there are latent elements like Ahaṅkar that are present everywhere but can only be sensed and not overtly detected**. Alongside Ahaṅkar surfaces the **buddhi** or intellect which is responsible for our cognitive processes.

The complex process of creation does not end with these elements, but also incorporates the ten indriyas, referred to as **indriyāṇi daśaikam**. These include the five **Karmendriyas** or the instruments of action and the five **jnānendriyas** or the instruments of cognition and perception. When the ego comes in contact with the intellect and becomes aware of the subject of the sense organs via sound, sight, touch, taste and smell, **it gives rise to the feelings of desire and yearning**.

13.6

icchā dveṣaḥ(s) sukhaṃ(n) duḥkhaṃ(m), saṅghātaścetanā dhṛtiḥ, etatkṣetraṃ(m) samāsenā, savikāramudāhṛtam. 13.6

Also desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, the physical body consciousness (life-breath), firmness: these comprise the kṣetra, with its modifications, described briefly.

As mentioned before, desires arise due to the interaction amongst the ego, the intellect, the sense organs and the sense-objects. If the desire is fulfilled we feel happy, but if the object of our craving seems out of reach, we become sorrowful, envious and jealous. Hence we can say that **it is the interplay of the sense organs that gives rise to the feelings that we all go through**. This interactivity amongst the various elements and the resultant fleeting emotions has been beautifully described in the following shloka:

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।

आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥ 14॥

(O son of Kunti, the contact between the senses and the sense objects gives rise to fleeting perceptions of happiness and distress. These are non-permanent, and come and go like the winter and summer seasons. O descendent of Bharat, one must learn to tolerate them without being disturbed.)

Sri Krishna explains how the sense organs along with the sense-objects combine with the subconscious mind and **dhṛiti** or resolve, which makes us achieve what we aspire for. **Take the example of the**

Indian army that is fighting so valiantly, armed with the dhriti or determination to protect our country at all costs. Thus, *icchā, dveṣaḥ sukhaṃ and duḥkhaṃ along with dhriti*, act cumulatively upon our consciousness as mentioned by the words *saṅghātaścetanā dhṛtiḥ*. To further elaborate, there are different *vikārās* or modifications that occur continuously in this creation. Multiple changes leading to desires, originate in the feelings of *dveṣaḥ* and ultimately culminates into *sukhaṃ and duḥkhaṃ* or happiness and sorrow.

The mention of these concepts illustrates the depth and sagacity of the knowledge given in the sacred Gitā. Whereas Science provides us with just a superficial knowledge of tangible phenomena like the body, Sri Krishna defines the body or sharira in ways that go way deeper than anyone in the modern world can explain, irrespective of their use of scientific instruments.

We should pause for a moment and take pride in the vast repertoire of wisdom imparted by Parameshwar in the Gitā. In order to absorb this profound insight on Kṣetra, we need to be equipped with some basic knowledge for better and quicker grasping of the complex ideas presented in the Gitā. When we, for example, prepare our child for the class 10 Board examinations, we do not jump to the highest class, but instead, make the child climb the ladder of each grade step-by-step, do we not? We make an effort to make the child knowledgeable so that he may be in a strong position to understand the complexity of the higher syllabus.

Much like a teacher preparing the students with elementary knowledge, Yogeshwar is now equipping us with basic knowledge so that we may be qualified to understand the vast implication of the concept of *kṣetrajña*. Shlokas 7 to 11 are more like assessments that evaluate who would qualify as a knowledgeable person. **In the entire Gitā, there are five such tests that help us in gauging and appraising our attributes along different dimensions of behavior.** The logic here is simple. The health of a tree gives us a fair idea of the richness of the soil in which the seedling of the tree was planted and the quantity of water that was used to nourish it. Much like the soil and the water in the case of the tree, **our knowledge is not visible but can only be gauged through the qualities that a person possesses.** In this chapter Sri Krishna talks of the qualities of the knowledgeable person. In chapter 2 HE has listed the features of *sthitaprajñasya* or one endowed with a steady intellect, whereas in chapter 12 Parameshwar elaborates on the qualities of an ideal Bhakta. Chapter 14 gives us the attributes of a person who is *Gunateeta* or beyond the three modes of material nature, while Chapter 16 gives us the clear line of distinction between *Daiva and Asuras*. **These are the litmus tests that we can use to evaluate our progress in this spiritual journey, and work upon our aberrations to achieve perfection.**

13.7

amānitvamadambhitvam, ahiṃsā kṣāntirārjavam, ācāryopāsanam(m) śaucaṃ(m), sthairyamātmavinigrahaḥ. 13.7

Absence of pride, freedom from hypocrisy, non-violence, forgiveness, uprightness of speech and mind etc, devout service of the perceptor, internal and external purity, steadfastness of mind and control of body, mind and the senses.

Amānitva or humility and modesty is the first quality coming out of the holy *Srimukha* of Yogeshwar to define a knowledgeable person. We have to look around at all the so-called erudite persons who boast endlessly about their scholarly skills, thereby failing in the first test of *amānitva*. A person who does not believe in reveling in honors and accolades is called an *amāni*. The second quality mentioned by HIM is *adambhitvam*. The word *Dambha* means, pretending to be something or someone that we are not. A person who professes to be a great devotee and performs puja only to get the approval and recognition of the people around him, is an example of *dambha*; so is the child who goes through the motions of studying only when his mother is watching him. Absence of dambha is *adambhitvam*.

In order to become **amānitvam and adambhitvam**, we need to be constantly in good company as that decides the direction in which our behavior would be steered. If we keep company of the worldly-minded who are too attached to materialistic aspirations, we too get tempted by these external temptations and lose our way in this worldly quagmire. However, **if we are with the satsangis like the Geeta sevis, then these virtues mentioned by Sri Krishna come automatically to us. Being in the company of satsangis or good people does not only mean interacting with them in physical proximity.** It means reading the biographies or hearing about their noble actions. We should read about the selfless actions of **Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj, Veer Savarkar and Bal Gangadhar Tilak**, so that the desirable qualities are infused in us, allowing no petty egos to arise within.

The next quality mentioned by HIM is **ahimsā** or absence of violence. Being Gitā sādhsaks, of course we do not resort to physical violence. **However, violence can also come in the form of speech and thoughts.** How often does this happen that our maid absents herself due to some genuine reason and we start bad-mouthing her, thereby hurting her emotionally? Even if we do not use harsh words, we do sometimes mentally curse her. This is nothing short of aggression on our part. We should control this tendency of aggression against others. Chapter 17 tells us how we can curb this inclination towards violence:

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ।

स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥ 15॥

(Words that do not cause distress, are truthful, inoffensive, and beneficial, as well as regular recitation of the Vedic scriptures—these are declared as austerity of speech.)

We can engage in **vān-mayam tapa** by reading good books, getting our minds purified and abstaining from psychological violence or verbal aggression. We may become Geetavratīs, but alongside we have to imbibe the values taught in the sacred text. **Our scriptures say, 'Let the good thoughts come from all directions'.**

The next quality mentioned is **kṣānti** which refers to endurance and forgiveness-not just in the manner of speaking but also from our hearts and mind, with complete absence of any feelings of revenge or *aakrosh*. **We have to only look at the example of Sri Ram who killed his enemy Ravana, but nevertheless asked Vibhishana to perform Ravana's last rites.** When Vibhishana refused, Sri Ram told him to consider Ravana as a brother of Sri Ram and perform the funeral ceremony for his sake!

Yet another quality mentioned as a yardstick of knowledge is **ārjavam** or simplicity. An ideal example of simplicity would be **Dr. Anandi Bai Joshi, the first lady doctor of India, who hailed from the region of Maharashtra.** She had been widely travelled to places as far afield as the western shores, but continued to live a spartan lifestyle even while abroad. Instead of emulating the western style of dressing or the occidental manner of speech as many of the nouveau-travellers do, Dr. Joshi would clad herself in a modest sari, thus retaining her Indian *vesh-bhusha*. **Her speech, marked by absence of deceit, crookedness or envy, remained unembellished by the western influence.** Rendering seva to the Guru or **ācāryopāsanam** is another quality of the knowledgeable ones. When we are in front of our gurus, we should discard all our pride and become as innocent as little children, eager to be under the complete control of the Guru. **Even if we cannot be in physical proximity to the Guru, the least we can do is listen to his words carefully and engage in the causes that the Guru advocates.**

Yet another important attribute is that of **śaucam** or purity-not just of the body but also of the inner states. Let us refer again to the shlokas of chapter 17 that give a detailed account of **śaucam**:

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम् ।

ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते ॥ 14॥

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ।

स्वाध्यायाभ्यसनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥ 15॥

मनः प्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः ।

भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्तपो मानसमुच्यते ॥ 16॥

(When worship of the Supreme Lord, the Brahmins, the spiritual master, the wise, and the elders is done with the observance of cleanliness, simplicity, celibacy, and non-violence then this worship is declared as the austerity of the body. Words that do not cause distress, are truthful, inoffensive, and beneficial, as well as regular recitation of the Vedic scriptures—these are declared as austerity of speech. Serenity of thought, gentleness, silence, self-control, and purity of purpose—all these are declared as austerity of the mind.)

Hence we see that besides engaging in good karmas like charity, tapa of the body, speech and mind can lead to both external and internal purification.

Sthairyamātmavinigrahaḥ or steadfastness and self control are considered important criteria for one who is situated in divine knowledge. An example of **dhriti** and resoluteness would be our determination to learn the Gitā. Often when we face challenging situations, we tend to become weak in our resolve and start dithering or faltering in our actions. In such cases, we only need to remind ourselves of what Sri Krishna has said in the second chapter, and what has been mentioned earlier we well:

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।

आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥ 14॥

(O son of Kunti, the contact between the senses and the sense objects gives rise to fleeting perceptions of happiness and distress. These are non-permanent, and come and go like the winter and summer seasons. O descendent of Bharat, one must learn to tolerate them without being disturbed.)

Only through forbearance can we become **sthairya**. **We have to only remind ourselves of Mirabai who overcame her adverse circumstances in the face of the rigid and conservative era to which she belonged, and continued to adhere to her path of devotion. Similarly, Shivaji Maharaj faced the most difficult challenges, and yet went on to establish his swarajya.** One can well imagine the quantum of **ātmavinigraha** he must have had to muster such courage! The word **ātmavinigrahaḥ** means control of mind along with the senses, and Shivaji displayed exactly this quality!

The list of qualities does not end here, but goes on in the next shloka as well.

13.8

**indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam, anahaṅkāra eva ca,
janmamṛtyujarāvyādhi, duḥkhadoṣānudarśanam. 13.8**

Dispassion towards the objects of enjoyment of this world and the next, and also absence of egotism; a constant perception of evil and pain and evils inherent in birth, death, old age and disease.

The word **indriyārtheṣu** means attraction. For example, if we are fasting on Ekadashi and come across a tempting savory like a samosa, we are unable to detach ourselves from our urge to grab a bite. In fact, our

palate continues to tickle us even after we have gratified our cravings, and we find it difficult to resist thinking about the food. This only serves the undesirable purpose of providing nourishment to our sense organs . Hence, we should learn to detach ourselves from such worldly temptations. A knowledgeable person feels a sense of complete **vairāgya** and is devoid of the feeling of **ahañ** or 'I'.

It is a usual tendency with most of us to claim credit for whatever we do. We crave recognition and laurels for our achievements. We need to remember Yogeshwar's words of caution as mentioned in chapter 11:

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व

जित्वा शत्रून्भुङ्क्व राज्यं समृद्धम् ।

मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव

निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ॥ 33॥

(Therefore, arise and attain honor! Conquer your foes and enjoy prosperous rulership. These warriors stand already slain by Me, and you will only be an instrument of My work, O expert archer.)

Whenever we feel that we are under the grip of our ego, we should remind ourselves that we are just the **nimitta-mātram** or HIS instruments. An excellent example of this kind of humbleness can be illustrated through an interaction that took place between our first President Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Sri Hanuman Prasad Poddar, who was a known activist, littérateur, magazine editor and a philanthropist of his time. Dr. Rajendra Prasad had written to Sri Hanuman Prasad to inform him that he was going to be honored with the Bharat-Ratna Award. Attributing his accomplishments to Divine Will, Sri Hanuman Prasad not only modestly refused the award, but also requested our Honorable President to refrain from making his name public, justifying his humble stand by claiming:

पता नहीं होने में ही सौंदर्य है

Had anyone in the present times been named for the award, that person would have flashed this achievement in his current status on whatsapp. Sri Hanuman Prasad epitomized the concept of '**nirahankar**'.

Often as we get older, we start perceiving the doshas or flaws in our lives. From petty comparison of wealth and material acquisitions such as possession of air conditioners, to matching our power of affordability with that of others, **we tend to evaluate our worth in terms of such baseless correlations, and consequently develop a dosh-drishti, as we focus on the gaps in our lives.** This drishti of seeing pain and sorrow is referred to as **janmamṛtyujarāvyādh duḥkhadoṣānudarśanam** or perception of birth, death, old age, disease, illness, evils and faults. Those who are knowledgeable however, are free from this flawed outlook on life. In fact, their dispassion toward suffering is a sign of their wisdom. It is the lack of knowledge and wisdom that makes us develop misperceptions in life, referred to as **dosha-drishti**.

How do we steer ourselves away from this erroneous approach to life? All we have to do is observe the people around us. Whenever we find our bodily pain intolerable, we just need to visit any hospital close-by and see the suffering of others. Whenever a child feels stifled by his parents' admonishments, he needs to think of the orphans of war who do not have parents to love them, cherish them or point out their mistakes to them. Developing this **drishti** will instill wisdom in us, prepare us for whatever might come our way, and enable us to make suitable arrangements for contingency situations, leading to a **drishti** that is free of all misperceptions and flaws.

The list of the qualities possessed by the knowledgeable ones spills on to the next few shlokas right till the

11th verse, which will be covered in the next session.

The discourse was followed by a Question-answer session:

Question & Answer

Poonam Sharma ji

Q. In the 7th shloka, what is the meaning of the word Sthairya? Also what is matra sparsha.

Ans: Sthairya means stability of mind. We tend to lose our minds whenever we are sad or angry. It also refers to the firmness of our aims, or being focused on aims that we have set for ourselves. The second part of your questions implies that when sense organs come in contact with objects it whips up feelings in us. For example when we hit a rough road while travelling, we get angry and anxious. This comes from *matra sparsha*. The emotions that come in are happiness and sorrow or *sheetoshna sukh-dukh da*. We should learn to tolerate them. In this particular shloka, Sri Krishna refers to Arjuna as Bharata to indicate that he belongs to an illustrious dynasty and can therefore endure the difficulties of life.

Rimjhim ji

Q. We observe great Gurus like our own Swamiji and Premanand ji, who remain fixed in one constant state all the time, and are unaffected by the sukha, dukha or sheetoshna. Then why do I get affected by these feelings? And how do we get free of these feelings?

Ans: This bondage of emotions happens with most of us but not with great people like our Guru, as he has done great *abhyaas* not just in this birth but in his previous births as well. You must note that a person is not born a saint, but becomes one due to his karma. Whatever challenge we face or the emotions we go through, are due to our own accumulated karmas of past lives. It is our past karmas that have set us on the path of this holy knowledge. We should therefore use this knowledge to purify our souls. Perhaps our next birth would lead us to greater spirituality.

The evening concluded with a rendition of Hanuman Chalisa



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You have enjoyed this vivechan writeup! In spite of intense editing and proofreading, errors of grammar, as also of omission and commission may have crept in. We appreciate your forbearance.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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