

॥ Shri Hari ॥

## Thirteenth Chapter

### INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the twelfth chapter Arjuna asked Lord Kṛṣṇa, "The devotees who, with their minds constantly fixed in You, adore You, as possessed of form and attributes, and those who adore only the Imperishable, the Unmanifest—which of these two are better?" The Lord, responded, "I consider those the best, who endowed with supreme faith, having fixed their mind on Me, worship Me." Further, He explained, "Those who adore only the Imperishable, the Unmanifest also attain Me, but greater is their difficulty, because they are centred in the body." Then He described the former type of worship, in detail. Now He starts the thirteenth chapter in order to explain the latter kind of worship in detail and in order to remove the main obstacle in this worship in the form of the identification of the body, with the self.

First the Lord starts the topic of discrimination between Kṣetra (Body) and Kṣetrajña (Soul) (Spirit).

*श्रीभगवानुवाच*

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।  
एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥ १ ॥

*śrībhagavān uvāca*

idaṁ śarīraṁ kaunteya kṣetramityabhidhīyate  
etadyo vetti taṁ prāhuḥ kṣetrajña iti tadvidah

The Blessed Lord said:

Body pointed out as 'this' (as distinct from the Self), O

**Kaunteya**, is termed as **Kṣetra**, the field and he, who knows it, as such, is called, **Kṣetrajña**, by the sages. 1

*Comment:—*

'**Idam śarīram Kaunteya Kṣetramityabhidhīyate**'—A man addresses all the material objects as 'this beast', 'this bird', 'this tree' etc., (meaning thereby that they are distinctly separate from him), but sometimes he calls this body as 'I' or sometimes as 'My'. The fact is that the body which is said to be 'I' or 'My' is also 'this' i.e., separate from the Self. Gross, subtle and causal—all the three bodies are to be called as 'this' or 'these'.

The gross (physical) body, consists of five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether. It is made of mother's ovum and father's sperm. It is also called '**Annamayakośa**' because it is born of evolute of food and is sustained by it. It is known as '**Idam**' (this), because it is known by senses.

The subtle body, consists of five sense-organs, five organs of action, five life-breaths, mind and intellect. It is called '**Prāṇamayakośa**' (sheath of life-breath), because of the predominance of life-breath, '**Manomayakośa**' because of the predominance of mind and '**Vijñānamayakośa**', because of the predominance of intellect. This subtle body, is also called '**Idam**', because it is known by the inner sense.

Ignorance, is called the causal body. A man's knowledge can have an access upto intellect only. Whatever is beyond intellect, is not open to knowledge. So, it is called ignorance. This ignorance being the cause of all bodies is called causal body—'**Ajñānamevāśya hi mūlakāraṇam**' (Adhyātma., Uttara. 5/9). This causal body, is also called personal nature and also '**Ānandamayakośa**' (sheath of bliss). In wakeful state, there is predominance of gross body and it is accompanied by subtle body, and causal body as well. In dream there is predominance of subtle body, which is accompanied by causal body. In sound sleep, there is predominance of causal body, and a person is

neither, aware of the gross body, which is 'Annamayakośa' nor of subtle body which is 'Prāṇamayakośa', 'Manomayakośa' and 'Vijñānamayakośa' viz., intellect merges in ignorance. Therefore, sound sleep is a state of causal body. In wakefulness and sleep, a man feels pleasure and pain, but in sound sleep, no pain is felt, there is only bliss. Therefore, the causal body is called 'Ānandamayakośa' (sheath of bliss). The causal body is also called 'Idam', because it is known by the self.

All the three bodies, are called 'Śarīra', because they decay every moment. (The root of Śarīra is 'Śṛ himsāyām'.) As the cover (made of leather) of a sword, is called 'sheath', similarly, the three bodies of the embodied soul, in which it resides and which it assumes as its own, are denoted by a sheath. The body is called a field (Kṣetra), because it is subject to constant decay (the root of Kṣetra is Kṣi, which means decay).

As seeds, sown in a field yield the corresponding crop in course of time, even so seeds of actions, which a man performs by having feelings of egoism and attachment, yield their fruit, at an appointed time and thus, one is born, a god, a bird, a beast or an insect, etc., according to his actions, and then dies. So it is called a 'Kṣetra' (field).

The body is different from the self, but a man identifies himself with it, and thus he gets entangled. He himself, being a portion of the Lord is sentient and great, but he considers himself great, by possessing wealth and property etc. If he regards himself, as great because of his wealth and property, it means that wealth and property, are superior to him. Thus he degrades himself by attaching too much importance to these and identifying with them. Therefore Lord advises to view the body etc., as different from the self by this expression.

'Etadyo vetti'—The soul, knows this body, it is the knower of the body, senses, mind, intellect and life-breath. But, sometimes it identifies itself with the body and says 'I am the body', while

sometimes it assumes its affinity of 'mineness' with the body and says, "This body is mine."

In the first half of this verse, the body has been mentioned by the term 'Idam', while in the second half, it has been referred to as the term 'Etat', yet the 'Etat' denotes more nearness, than the 'Idam'. Therefore, the term 'Idam' stands for the body, while 'Etat' means 'ness in the body.

**'Tam prāhuḥ kṣetrajña\* iti tadvidah'**—As in the sixteenth verse of the second chapter, those who know the truth about real and unreal, are called seers, here those who know the reality about Kṣetra (Body) and Kṣetrajña (Soul), are called sages. The soul is called Kṣetrajña, because it assumes its identity or affinity, with the body, otherwise it is Supreme Soul, Paramātmā (Gītā 13/31).

#### A Vital Fact

There is bondage for a man if he has assumed his affinity of 'ness, and 'mineness', with the body. But, actually he is different from the body. So, if he realizes the truth, that the body being 'Idam' (this), is different from him, he is emancipated. This knowledge, about the body that this is different from the self, is significant, not only for strivers, but also for all human beings, because all of them are eligible for attaining salvation, or emancipation. So the Lord, has made this distinction, between the self and the body, just at the beginning of the gospel.

The body, is seen distinct from the self. Therefore, it is called 'Idam'. The physical body, consisting of earth, water, fire, air and ether which is ever-changing is 'Idam' (this). Change in the body, is perceived by five sense-organs—ear, eye, skin, tongue and nose. Changes in sense-organs are perceived, by the mind. The change of mind (its fixity or volatility), is perceived by intellect. The change in the intellect (full understanding, partial

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\* The term 'Kṣetrajña' being the object of the verb—'Prāhuḥ' should have the second inflexion but because of the word 'Iti' there is first inflexion.

understanding, no understanding), is known by the self, which ever remains unchanged. Thus the self is a real onlooker, which can perceive and know others independently, but can never be known or seen, by anyone.\*

Senses can know their objects, but objects cannot know senses (which are subtler than and superior to, objects and their illuminator). Similarly, senses and sense-objects cannot know the mind; the mind, senses and sense-objects cannot know the intellect, while intellect, mind, senses and sense-objects cannot know the self. The reason is that senses, mind and intellect, are not an independent knower. Each can know objects of grosser form than it, while the self is an independent knower, because it is far subtler than and superior to a body, senses, mind and intellect.

Though, it has been mentioned that sense-organs, mind and intellect are also perceivers (onlookers), yet the fact is, that these can perceive, only when they are accompanied by the self, because the mind and intellect etc., being evolutes of matter (Prakṛti)—(Nature) cannot be independent onlookers. The self, is the real onlooker.

Now a question arises, as to how the soul which is sentient, becomes an onlooker of the insentient intellect etc., because the onlooker can see objects of its own class? The answer is, that the soul identifies itself, with the insentient matter and accepts its own separate entity as 'I am'. This 'I' is neither insentient, nor sentient. By identifying itself with matter, it (man) says, "I am rich or I am learned." By giving high value to embodiment of consciousness (self), it says, "I am Brahma". Thus this 'I', is the soul seated in Nature, which is the cause of his birth, in good

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\* First of all the eye is the onlooker while the form is the object to be seen. Then mind is the onlooker while the senses such as eyes are the objects to be seen. Then intellect is the onlooker and the mind is the object to be seen. At last the soul is the onlooker of the dispositions of the intellect but the soul can't be seen by anyone.

and bad wombs (13/21). Thus, the embodied soul, has both the portions, the sentient, as well as the insentient. The sentient portion, attracts him towards the Lord, while the insentient portion because of identity with matter, attracts him towards matter, and thus he becomes an onlooker of intellect, mind, senses, sense-objects and body etc. This assumed identity, or affinity, is the root cause of all evils.

**Appendix**—The term ‘Idam’ (kṣetra), comprises infinite universes. In infinite universes, in all the beings ‘parā’ (the Self) is ‘kṣetrajña’ and ‘aparā’ (the world) is ‘kṣetra’. A striver (the Self) is the knower of the world and he believes in God. The knower is more pervading. Therefore there are infinite universes, in a fragment of Kṣetrajña—‘yena sarvamidaṁ tatam’ (Gītā 2/17). A striver should know that he is not kṣetra but he is kṣetrajña, the knower of kṣetra.

The objective world is in a fragment of the seer (onlooker). As all objects are seen with the eye, but it does not mean that the eye can’t see more objects. Therefore the eye is bigger than the objective world. We may know innumerable facts with the intellect but it does not mean that intellect has no further power to know more. In it there is further scope to know more, therefore intellect is more extensive than the innumerable facts known with it. The origin, existence and dissolution of Brahmā are also within the knowledge of our intellect. All the bodies—gross, subtle and causal are the entities to be perceived. The whole phenomenal existence is in a fragment of the seer (kṣetrajña).

A man is called ‘wealthy’ because he possesses wealth, but if he has no wealth, the person remains but he is no more called ‘wealthy’. Similarly the self is called ‘kṣetrajña’ by having affinity with ‘kṣetra’ but when affinity with ‘kṣetra’ is renounced, the self remains but it is no more called ‘kṣetrajña’. It means that the same pure-consciousness (from the view-point of understanding) is called ‘kṣetrajña’ by having affinity with ‘kṣetra’,

is called imperishable by having affinity with the perishable, is called—‘śarīrī’ (embodied soul) by having relation with ‘śarīra’ (body), is called ‘draṣṭā’ by being related with ‘dṛśya’, is called ‘sākṣī’ (witness) by having connection with ‘sākṣya’ (object to be witnessed) and is called a doer (kartā) by being connected with instruments (karaṇa). In fact that entity is nameless. That is mere awareness.



*Link:—In the next verse, the Lord explains what that Kṣetrajña is.*

क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ।  
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम ॥ २ ॥

kṣetrajñam cāpi mām viddhi sarvakṣetreṣu bhārata  
kṣetrakṣetrajñayorjñānam yattajjñānam matam mama

Know Me as the knower of self (Kṣetrajña) in all the bodies (Kṣetras), Arjuna. The Knowledge of Kṣetra and Kṣetrajña, is considered true knowledge, by Me. 2

*Comment:—*

'Kṣetrajñam cāpi mām viddhi sarvakṣetreṣu bhārata'—In all Kṣetras (fields or bodies), 'I am', consists of two parts 'I', and 'am'. In 'I am' 'I' is Kṣetra (which has been mentioned as 'Etat', in the preceding verse), while 'am', the knower of 'Tness, is Kṣetrajña (which has been called the knower, by the term, 'Yah vetti'. It is called 'am', because of the use of the word 'I'. If it is not used with 'I', it will not remain 'am', but it will remain 'Is'. The reason is that, 'Is' is called 'am' because of its use with 'I'. Therefore, in fact, 'Kṣetrajña' (am), has its affinity with God (Is). So the Lord declares, "Know Me, as Kṣetrajña, in all Kṣetras."

The object, known is called 'Jñeya', and that 'Jñeya' is known, through an organ. There are two types of organs—outer and inner. A man, knows objects with outer organs (ears, eyes etc.) and knows the outer organs with inner organs (mind, intellect etc.).