

XIII. The Yoga of Distinction Between The Field & the Knower of the Field

Summary of Thirteenth Discourse

In this discourse we have one of the most significant, most illuminating, most inspiring and most mystical portions of the *Bhagavad Gita*. The Lord gives us a wonderfully revealing insight into the human individual. It is the metaphysics of man, the unknown. The immortal Soul, with its physical embodiment, is the main theme of this discourse. The supreme transcendental Spirit, which is the eternal substratum beyond both, is also described in a wonderful manner. The knower of the Supreme Reality is instantly liberated.

The blessed Lord tells us that the knowledge of the Field and the Knower of the Field is the true knowledge. This highest and the best knowledge grants us divine wisdom and spiritual illumination that lead to divine beatitude. This body is the Field. The Immortal Soul (yourself), dwelling in the body is the Knower of the Field. Verily, it is the Supreme Being who has projected Himself and assumed the form of this Knower of the Field within this body. This self is none other than That. Thus, Lord Krishna explains the mystery of the individual soul dwelling within this mortal body. This knowledge constitutes the main subject matter of all the scriptures and the highest philosophical works.

The five elements, the ego, the mind, intellect and the ten organs, desire and aversion and such factors constitute the Field. Next follows a wonderful summing-up of what constitutes true knowledge. Then follows the declaration of the Supreme Soul, the knowledge of which grants us immortality. That Supreme Reality is the one universal Essence present everywhere. It pervades all. It shines within the inmost chambers of our heart, it is everything, it is the one seer, the witness, the guide, sustainer, experiencer and Lord of all. One who knows this mystery is not bound by activity even in the midst of life. When we perceive this supreme Presence dwelling in all beings we cannot injure anyone. Krishna asks us to see and know the difference between the Field (body or Prakriti) and the Knower of the Field (Spirit or Purusha), and thus reach the Self. This is the teaching and the message of this illuminating discourse.

Arjuna Uvaacha:

*Prakritim purusham chaiva kshetram kshetrajanameva cha;
Etadveditumicchaami jnaanam jneyam cha keshava.*

Arjuna said:

1. I wish to learn about Nature (matter) and the Spirit (soul), the Field and the Knower of the Field, knowledge and that which ought to be known.

Sri Bhagavaan Uvaacha:

*Idam shareeram kaunteya kshetramityabhidheeyate;
Etadyo vetti tam praahuh kshetrajan iti tadvidah.*

The Blessed Lord said:

2. This body, O Arjuna, is called the Field; he who knows it is called the Knower of the Field by those who know of them, that is, by the sages.

*Kshetrajnam chaapi maam viddhi sarvakshetreshu bhaarata;
Kshetrakshetrajnayor jnaanam yattat jnaanam matam mama.*

3. Do thou also know Me as the Knower of the Field in all fields, O Arjuna! Knowledge of both the Field and the Knower of the Field is considered by Me to be *the* knowledge.

*Tat kshetram yaccha yaadrik cha yadvikaari yatashcha yat;
Sa cha yo yatprabhaavashcha tatsamaasena me shrinu.*

4. What the Field is and of what nature, what its modifications are and whence it is, and also who He is and what His powers are—hear all that from Me in brief.

*Rishibhirbahudhaa geetam cchandobhirvividhaih prithak;
Brahmasootrapadaishchaiva hetumadbhirvinishchitaih.*

5. Sages have sung in many ways, in various distinctive chants and also in the suggestive words indicative of the Absolute, full of reasoning and decisive.

*Mahaabhootaanyahankaaro buddhiravyaktameva cha;
Indriyaani dashaikam cha pancha chendriyagocharaah.*

6. The great elements, egoism, intellect and also unmanifested Nature, the ten senses and one, and the five objects of the senses,

COMMENTARY: Great elements: earth, water, fire, air and ether are so called because they pervade all modifications of matter. The ten senses are: the five organs of knowledge (ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose), and the five organs of action (hand, feet, mouth, anus and generative organ).

The one: this is the mind. The five objects of the senses are sound, touch, form colour, taste and smell.

*Icchaa dweshah sukham duhkham sanghaatashchetanaa dhritih;
Etat kshetram samaasena savikaaramudaahritam.*

7. Desire, hatred, pleasure, pain, the aggregate (the body), fortitude and intelligence—the Field has thus been described briefly with its modifications.

*Amaanitwam adambhitiwam ahimsaa kshaantiraarjavam;
Aachaaryopaasanam shaucham sthairyamaatmavinigrahanam.*

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

*Indriyaartheshu vairaagyamanahankaara eva cha;
Janmamrityujaraavyaadhi dukhadoshaanu darshanam.*

9. Indifference to the objects of the senses, also absence of egoism, perception of (or reflection on) the evil in birth, death, old age, sickness and pain,

*Asaktiranabhishwangah putradaaragrihaadishu;
Nityam cha samachittatwam ishtaanishtopapattishu.*

10. Non-attachment, non-identification of the Self with son, wife, home and the rest, and constant even-mindedness on the attainment of the desirable and the undesirable,

*Mayi chaananyayogena bhaktiravyabhichaarinee;
Viviktadesha sevitwam aratir janasamsadi.*

11. Unswerving devotion unto Me by the Yoga of non-separation, resort to solitary places, distaste for the society of men,

*Adhyaatma jnaana nityatwam tattwa jnaanaarth darshanam;
Etajnaanamiti proktam ajnaanam yadato'nyathaa.*

12. Constancy in Self-knowledge, perception of the end of true knowledge—this is declared to be knowledge, and what is opposed to it is ignorance.

*Jneyam yattat pravakshyaami yajnaatwaa'mritamashnute;
Anaadimatparam brahma na sattannaasaduchyate.*

13. I will declare that which has to be known, knowing which one attains to immortality, the beginningless supreme Brahman, called neither being nor non-being.

*Sarvatah paanipaadam tat sarvato'kshishiromukham;
Sarvatah shrutimalloke sarvamaavritya tishthati.*

14. With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere, He exists in the worlds, enveloping all.

*Sarvendriyagunaabhaasam sarvendriyavivarjitam;
Asaktam sarvabhricchaiva nirgunam gunabhoktru cha.*

15. Shining by the functions of all the senses, yet without the senses; unattached, yet supporting all; devoid of qualities, yet their experiencer,

*Bahirantashcha bhootaanaam acharam charameva cha;
Sookshmatwaat tadavijneyam doorastham chaantike cha tat.*

16. Without and within (all) beings, the unmoving and also the moving; because of His subtlety, unknowable; and near and far away is That.

*Avibhaktam cha bhooteshu vibhaktamiva cha sthitam;
Bhootabhartru cha tajjneyam grasishnu prabhavishnu cha.*

17. And undivided, yet He exists as if divided in beings; He is to be known as the supporter of beings; He devours and He generates also.

*Jyotishaamapi tajjyotistamasah paramuchyate;
Jnaanam jneyam jnaanagamyam hridi sarvasya vishthitam.*

18. That, the Light of all lights, is beyond darkness; it is said to be knowledge, the Knowable and the goal of knowledge, seated in the hearts of all.

*Iti kshetram tathaa jnaanam jneyam choktam samaasatah;
Madbhakta etadvijnaaya madbhaavaayopapadyate.*

19. Thus the Field as well as knowledge and the Knowable have been briefly stated. My devotee, knowing this, enters into My Being.

*Prakritim purusham chaiva viddhyaanaadee ubhaavapi;
Vikaaraamshcha gunaamshchaiva viddhi prakritisambhavaan.*

20. Know thou that Nature and Spirit are beginningless; and know also that all modifications and qualities are born of Nature.

*Kaaryakaaranakartrutwe hetuh prakritiruchyate;
Purushah sukhaduhkhaanaam bhoktritwe heturuchyate.*

21. In the production of the effect and the cause, Nature (matter) is said to be the cause; in the experience of pleasure and pain, the soul is said to be the cause.

*Purushah prakritistho hi bhungkte prakritijaan gunaan;
Kaaranam gunasango'sya sadasadyoni janmasu.*

22. The soul seated in Nature experiences the qualities born of Nature; attachment to the qualities is the cause of his birth in good and evil wombs.

*Upadrashtaanumantaa cha bhartaa bhoktaa maheshwarah;
Paramaatmeti chaapyukto dehe'smin purushah parah.*

23. The Supreme Soul in this body is also called the spectator, the permitter, the supporter, the enjoyer, the great Lord and the Supreme Self.

*Ya evam vetti purusham prakritim cha gunaih saha;
Sarvathaavartamaano'pi na sa bhooyo'bhibaayate.*

24. He who thus knows Spirit and Matter, together with the qualities, in whatever condition he may be, he is not reborn.

*Dhyaanenaatmani pashyanti kechidaatmaanamaatmanaa;
Anye saankhyena yogena karmayogena chaapare.*

25. Some by meditation behold the Self in the Self by the Self, others by the Yoga of knowledge, and others by the Yoga of action.

*Anye twevamajaanantah shrutwaanyebhya upaasate;
Te'pi chaatitarantyeva mrityum shrutiparaayanaah.*

26. Others also, not knowing thus, worship, having heard of it from others; they, too, cross beyond death, regarding what they have heard as the supreme refuge.

*Yaavat sanjaayate kinchit sattwam sthaarajangamam;
Kshetrakshetrajnasaamyogaat tadvidhi bharatarshabha.*

27. Wherever a being is born, whether it be unmoving or moving, know thou, O best of the Bharatas (Arjuna), that it is from the union between the Field and its Knower.

*Samam sarveshu bhooteshu tishthantam parameshwaram;
Vinashyatswavinashyantam yah pashyati sa pashyati.*

28. He sees, who sees the Supreme Lord, existing equally in all beings, the unperishing within the perishing.

COMMENTARY: Birth is the root cause of the modifications of change, growth, decay and death. The other changes of state manifest after the birth of the body. But the Lord is changeless and He is birthless, decayless and deathless.

*Samam pashyan hi sarvatra samavasthitameeshwaram;
Na hinastyaatmanaa'tmaanam tato yaati paraam gatim.*

29. Because he who sees the same Lord dwelling equally everywhere does not destroy the Self by the self, he goes to the highest goal.

*Prakrityaiva cha karmaani kriyamaanaani sarvashah;
Yah pashyati tatha'a'tmaanam akartaaram sa pashyati.*

30. He sees, who sees that all actions are performed by Nature alone and that the Self is actionless.

*Yadaa bhootapritchagbhaavam ekastham anupashyati;
Tata eva cha vistaaram brahma sampadyate tadaa.*

31. When a man sees the whole variety of beings as resting in the One, and spreading forth from That alone, he then becomes Brahman.

COMMENTARY: A man attains to unity with the Supreme when he knows or realises through intuition that all these manifold forms are rooted in the One. Like waves in water, like rays in the sun, so also all forms are rooted in the One.

*Anaaditwaan nirgunatwaat paramaatmaayam avyayah;
Shareerastho'pi kaunteya na karoti na lipyate.*

32. Being without beginning and devoid of (any) qualities, the Supreme Self, imperishable, though dwelling in the body, O Arjuna, neither acts nor is tainted!

*Yathaa sarvagatam sauksmyaadaakaasham nopalipyate;
Sarvatraavasthito dehe tathaatmaa nopalipyate.*

33. As the all-pervading ether is not tainted because of its subtlety, so the Self seated everywhere in the body, is not tainted.

*Yathaa prakaashayatyekah kritsnam lokamimam ravih;
Kshetram kshetree tatha kritsnam prakaashayati bhaarata.*

34. Just as the one sun illumines the whole world, so also the Lord of the Field (the Supreme Self) illumines the whole Field, O Arjuna!

*Kshetrakshetrajnayor evam antaram jnaanachakshushaa;
Bhootaprakritimoksham cha ye vidur yaanti te param.*

35. They who, through the eye of knowledge, perceive the distinction between the Field and its Knower, and also the liberation from the Nature of being, they go to the Supreme.

COMMENTARY: They who know through the eye of intuition opened by meditation and the instructions of the Guru and the scriptures, that the Field is insentient, the doer, changing and finite, and that the Knower of the Field is pure Consciousness, the non-doer, unchanging and infinite, and who also perceive the non-existence of Nature, ignorance, the Unmanifested, the material cause of being,—they attain the Supreme.

Hari Om Tat Sat
Iti Srimad Bhagavadgeetaasoopanishatsu Brahmaavidyaayaam
Yogashaastre Sri Krishnaarjunasamvaade
Kshetrakshetrajnavibhaagayogo Naama Trayodasho'dhyaayah

Thus in the *Upanishads* of the glorious *Bhagavad Gita*, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the thirteenth discourse entitled:

“The Yoga of the Distinction Between The Field and the Knower of the Field”
