

Srimad Bhagavad Gita

Chapter 13
Kshetra Kshetrajna Vibhaaga Yogah:
Yoga of Distinction between
The Field and the Knower of the Field

Transliterated Sanskrit Text

Free Translation

&

Brief Explanation

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Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 13 (Part-1)
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The Field and the Knower of the Field
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Preamble

This is one of the most well-known Chapters in the Gita which explains and also provides guidance to experience the Self. It is an extension of the previous Chapter in as much as it gives exhaustive instructions for meditation upon the Imperishable Formless Spirit (Unmanifest). This Chapter continues the discussion of the theme started in Chapter 7 entitled 'Yoga of Knowledge and Wisdom' and Chapter 8 entitled 'Yoga of Imperishable Brahman'. The intervening four Chapters (9-12) are a slight detour in order to clarify the doubts raised by Arjuna.

As earlier stated each group of six Chapters of the Gita explains the sacred words of the Great Declaration (*Mahavakya*) -*Tat Twam Asi* - That Thou Art. The terms 'Thou' and 'That' were dealt with in Chapters 1-6 (Path of action or Karma Yoga) and 7-12 (Path of devotion or Bhakti Yoga) respectively. The closing group of six Chapters beginning with this Chapter explains the term 'Art' (Path of knowledge or Jnana Yoga) which establishes the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul.

A living organism is the Spirit functioning through the covering of matter. 'That' (Spirit) covered by matter is 'Thou' (Man). Therefore, man without matter covering him is the Eternal, Infinite Spirit.

One should know what constitutes this matter envelopment in order to discard it and reach the 'Man' (Spirit). This discrimination between matter, which is inert, and Spirit, which is the spark of life, is the focus of discussion in this Chapter. The body called the Field (*Kshetra*), the soul called the Knower of the Field (*Kshetrajna*) and the difference between them are the subject matter of this Chapter.

The process of discarding or getting rid of the matter is nothing but the process of meditation. The techniques of meditation were explained in Chapters 5 & 6. This Chapter tells us as to what the disciplined mind and intellect have to do during meditation and how to draw ourselves from ourselves to reach our identity with the Infinite.

The matter equipments and the world of objects perceived by them is the Field. The Knower of the Field is the Supreme Consciousness which illumines the Field and therefore apparently functions within the Field. It is obvious that one can be knower only so long as one is in the field of knowable. A driver is one so long as he is driving a vehicle. Once he is out of the vehicle he is no more a driver although he, as a person, remains the same.

Similarly the Pure Consciousness when it perceives the world of plurality becomes the knower of the field (Driver). As the driver experiences the pains and pleasures of driving while performing the act of driving, the knower of the field (Consciousness) experiences the joys and sorrows of the pluralistic world while perceiving such world of multiplicity through the body equipments. Thus the joys and miseries of the *samsara* are the features of the knower of the field, the Jiva.

If the field and the knower of the field can be understood as separate entities through the process of meditation, one can get himself detached from the sheath of matter and consequently from the joys and sorrows associated with it. Thereby, the knower of the field who was the experiencer of the sorrows and joys of the material world himself becomes the experiencer of the Absolute Bliss just as the driver himself becomes an ordinary person without any designation when he is enjoying the pleasure of being with his own family. The knower minus the field of the known becomes the Pure Knowledge, Itself being always perfect.

This Chapter, therefore, leads us to deep spiritual insights enabling us to realize the Imperishable and the Eternal within ourselves. When the knower of the field understands his real nature which is apart from the field, he rediscovers his own Divine nature. He realizes that he is the Self which, when enveloped by the field, becomes the knower of the field full of agitations.

Krishna answers the query of Arjuna through the entire chapter. A significant contribution of this chapter is the enumeration of twenty two qualities of a *jnani* (enlightened person) on the lines of the listing of thirty five qualities of a *bhakta* in the previous chapter. This chapter concludes by showing the way towards realization of the Self and how with the Eye of Wisdom one can liberate himself.

In the last Chapter the glory and the means to realize the Absolute was not elaborately dealt with. Hence this aspect which is the subject of *jnana yoga* is taken up for detailed discussion in this Chapter. The *kshetra*, the body and the *kshetrajna*, the soul are entirely different from each other. It is due to ignorance that they are being identified as one and the same. In the present Chapter both these terms are differentiated for explanation and hence the title of this Chapter is Kshetra Kshetrajna Vibhaaga Yogah: Yoga of Distinction between The Field and the Knower of the Field.

Some editions of the Gita omit the first verse of this chapter containing Arjuna's query seeking clarification on certain philosophic terms on the ground that it is a later interpolation in the text like commentator sage Madhusudana Saraswati. But its inclusion appears appropriate in view of the context of the question raised by Arjuna.

The Text

**arjuna uvaacha
prakritim purusham chaiva kshetram kshetrajnam eva cha
etadveditumicchaami jnaanam jneyam cha keshava // 13.1 //**

Arjuna said

Prakriti (Matter) and Purusha (Spirit) also the Kshetra (The Field) and the Kshetrajna (The Knower of the Field), Knowledge and that which is to be known, all these I wish to learn, O Kesava.

Prakriti and Purusha:

Prakriti is matter, inert equipments. Purusha is the Spirit, the vital sentient truth. The spirit in itself has no expression except when it functions through matter. When Purusha joins Prakriti experiences - good or bad - take place. Electricity by itself is unmanifest but when it functions through different gadgets it is manifested as light or heat or cold etc.

The Field and the Knower of the Field:

The knower of the field is the knowing principle when it functions in the knowable. Without knowable the knower himself becomes nothing but Pure Knowledge in which the functions of knowing are absent. Arjuna desires to learn the implications of these concepts.

sri bhagavaan uvaacha

idam shareeram kaunteya kshetramityabhidheeyate

etadyo vetti tam praahuh kshetrajna iti tadvidah // 13.2 //

Sri Bhagavan said

This body, O Kaunteya, is called the Field; he who knows it (body) is called the Knower of the Field by those who know of them i.e. by the sages.

This body is the Field:

The use of the demonstrative pronoun 'this' while referring to the body suggests that this body is different from the one who perceives or knows it. The word 'kshetra' signifies both 'body' and matter. The body is called 'field' because the fruits of action are reaped in it as in the field or it is subject to constant decay. It is the body in which events happen; all growth, decline and death take place in it. Just as seeds sown in a field yield the corresponding crops in course of time, even so seeds of karma sown in this body yield their fruit at the appropriate time. Hence the body is called the field, the object.

Knower of the Field:

The word 'kshetrajna' or knower of the field means the individual soul, which is, in reality one with the Supreme Soul who is the Subject. The entire range of objective reality, the *prakriti*, the matter, which is open to knowledge through the equipments of mind, intellect and senses, are material in their constitution, perishable in their nature and mutable in their essence.

The conscious Self is wholly different from the aforesaid material world of objective reality. It is the knower of the matter consisting of perceptions, feelings and thoughts. *Prakriti* is unconscious activity and *purusha* is inactive consciousness. The conscious principle, inactive and detached, which lies behind all active states as witness, is the Knower of the Field. It is the Lord of the matter and runs through it. This is the

distinction between consciousness and the objects which that consciousness observes. Kshetrajna is the light of awareness, the Knower of all objects and He is neither the embodied mind nor an object in the world. He is the Supreme Lord, calm and eternal and does not need the use of the senses and the mind for His witnessing. It is the '*para prakriti*' or the higher nature referred to in the 7th Chapter of the Gita wherein Sri Krishna described the two prakritis of the Lord. The lower, *apara prakriti*, or the field, consists of three *gunas* and the higher *prakriti* (the soul or *Jiva* when individualized) is the Knower of the Field.

The 13th Chapter proposes to describe the two prakritis- the Field and the Knower of the Field- in order to determine finally the nature of the Supreme Lord Himself i.e., the word '*tat*' in the *mahavakya* '*Tat Twam Asi*'.

**kshetrajnam chaapi maam viddhi sarvakshetreshu bhaarata
kshetrakshetrajnayor jnaanam yattajjnaanam matam mama // 13.3 //**

You also know Me as the knower of the Field in all Fields, O Bharata. Only the Knowledge of the Field and its Knower is considered by Me as true knowledge.

Sri Krishna declares that only the knowledge of the perishable and inert matter and the nature of the Infinite and Imperishable Spirit is the True Knowledge.

Kshetra or the field is the matter consisting of equipments of perception and what is perceived by them. Kshetrajna is the knower of what is perceived through the instruments of perception. To distinguish thus the worlds of the subject and the object is what the Lord tells as true knowledge.

SALIENT POINTS TO BE DISCUSSED

**tat kshetram yaccha yaadrikcha yadvikaari yatashcha yat
sa cha yo yatprabhaavashcha tatsamaasena me shrinu // 13.4 //**

Hear briefly from Me what the Field is, what its properties are, what its modifications are, from where it comes, who its knower is and what His powers are.

Sri Krishna says He is going to explain what constitutes the Field, its properties, its origin, its modifications i.e. what its by-products are when it changes its form, what is the knowing principle in the Field and what are powers of perception, feeling and thought of the Knower of the Field?

CITING THE AUTHORITIES

**rishibhirbahudhaa geetam chhandobhirvidhah prithak
brahmasootrapadaishchaiva hetumadbhirvinishchitaih // 13.5 //**

All this has been sung by sages in many and different ways, in various distinctive hymns, and also in well reasoned and convincing passages indicative of Brahman.

Sri Krishna speaks very highly of the nature of the Field and the Knower of the Field in order to create interest in Arjuna. He says what He is going to explain are the very truths that are already contained in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the *Brahmasutras* or the aphorisms of Brahman, later systemized by Badarayana. The Veda hymns are called *cchandasa* or rhythmical utterances. These revelations of the sages are not in the nature of any commandments but they are logical thoughts, full of reasoning which are highly convincing.

THE FIELD IS DESCRIBED

**mahaabhootaanyahankaaro buddhiravyaktameva cha
indriyaani dashaikam cha pancha chendriyagocharaah // 13.6 //**

The great elements, egoism (I-consciousness), intellect and also the unmanifested, the ten senses and the mind and the five objects of the senses.

**icchaa dweshah sukham duhkham sanghaatashchetanaa dhritih
etat kshetram samaasena savikaaramudaahritam // 13.7 //**

Desire, hatred, pleasure, pain, the aggregate (body), intelligence, and fortitude - this briefly stated, is the Field together with its modifications.

From here onwards Sri Krishna starts explaining His promised themes one by one in great details. The above two verses explain various items constituting together as the Field which was earlier indicated as the body. A reference may be made to the Chapter 7 Part-1 in this series where a detailed discussion has been given covering all these concepts.

Elements: Five in number viz. space, air, fire, water and earth. (Ref. Ch.7.4)

Egoism: The sense of 'I' ness and 'My' ness or the individuality that arises in our relationship with the world of objects.

Intellect: The determining faculty which thinks, discriminates and decides.

Unmanifested: They are the unseen cause, total vasanas (impressions) which rule the mind and intellect in determining their activities in the outside world. When these vasanas are manifested they are seen as the world of objects. (Ref. Ch.7.14)

Ten senses: Five sense organs of perception viz. ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose and five sense organs of action viz. hands, feet, mouth, anus and generative organs. These are the channels by which an individual perceives the stimuli and responds to them.

The one: This stands for the mind which thinks about the stimuli received from the sense organs and sends forth the responses after getting the judgment from the intellect.

Five objects of the senses: Each sense organ perceives only one type of sense object. They are ear -sound, skin - touch, eye - a form, tongue - taste and nose - smell.

The above 24 items constitute *kshetra*, the matter or the gross body or the Field.

Their modifications are enumerated now. They are desire, hatred, pleasure, pain, the assemblage of the body, intelligence, steadfastness etc. In short, not only the gross body, mind and intellect but also the perceptions experienced through them, the world of objects, emotions and thoughts are included in the term `Field' - this body. All the world of objects, which includes emotions and thoughts, are `knowable' put together in a bunch. This is called the Field, the object. The Knowing Principle or the Knower is the subject. Real knowledge consists in understanding the distinction between the object and the subject.

The following five verses enumerate the 22 qualities which together indicate the Knower of the Field.

THE KNOWER OF THE FIELD IS DESCRIBED

**amaanitwam adambhitwam ahimsaa kshaantiraarjavam
aacharyopaasanam shaucham sthairyamaatmavinigraha // 13.8 //**

Humility, modesty, non-injury, forgiveness, uprightness, service to the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self control

“The knower is the subject and the turning of it into an object or a thing means ignorance, *avidya*. Objectification is the ejection of the subject into the world of the objects. Nothing in the object world is an authentic reality. We can realize the subject in us only by overcoming the enslaving power of the object world, by refusing to be dissolved into it. This means resistance, suffering. Acquiescence in the surrounding world and its conventions diminishes suffering; refusal increases it. But suffering is the only process through which we fight for our true nature - *sat chit anand.*” - Dr.S.Radhakrishnan.

The Lord therefore prescribes certain conditions necessary for understanding the Infinite Self by describing the elements of knowledge and practices conducive to spiritual enlightenment in the Verses 8 -12.

1. Humility - absence of self-esteem.
2. Modesty- Un-pretentiousness, not proclaiming one's own greatness.
3. Non-injury - not causing suffering to any other living being intentionally.
4. Forgiveness - forbearance and patience, capacity to put up with everything without getting disturbed.
5. Uprightness - straight forwardness in behavior.
6. Service to the teacher - not merely physical but seeking mental and intellectual identity with the teacher's heart and intellect.
7. Purity - external: cleanliness of body and environment; internal: taintless thoughts, emotions, intentions and motives.

8. Steadfastness - firmness and consistency of purpose, concentration of all efforts in achieving the spiritual goal.
9. Self control - self-restraint practiced in dealing with others.

**indriyaartheshu vairaagyamanahankaara eva cha
janma mrityu jaraa vyaadhi dukkha doshaanu darshanam // 13.9 //**

Dispassion to the objects of the senses, absence of egoism, perception of evil of birth, death, old age, sickness and pain.

10. Dispassion or absence of attachment to objects - does not mean running away from objects of the world but detaching oneself from becoming a slave to the sensuous objects.
11. Absence of egoism - absence of the sense of superiority in oneself.
12. Perception of evil in birth, death, old age and sickness - every physical body goes through these changes and at each stage of life encounters sorrows and troubles which fact should be thoroughly understood by a seeker.
13. Pain - birth, death, old age and sickness are full of miseries and all miseries are always painful which one should be conscious of. Pain is of three types viz, those arising in one's own person, those produced by external agents and those produced by God i.e. by circumstances beyond anybody's control. Unless the seeker is aware of the pain in existence there will not be any urge for spiritual enquiry. The sense of revolt against pain is the fuel which propels the seeker to run fast to reach the spiritual goal.

Reflection on the evils and miseries of birth, death, old age and sickness leads to indifference to sense-pleasures and the senses turn towards the Innermost self for knowledge. Birth, death etc. are not miseries by themselves but they produce misery in their aftermath.

**asaktiranabhishwanga putradaaragrihaadishu
nityam cha samachittatwam ishtaanishtopapattishu // 13.10 //**

Non-attachment, non-identification of self with son, wife, home and the rest and even-mindedness to all agreeable and disagreeable events.

14. Nonattachment - When a man thinks that an object is his, the idea of `Mine' ness is born in his mind. He identifies himself with that object, loves it and gets attached to it. Non-attachment is the absence of such identification with any object. Keeping the mind away from all attachments assures peaceful life.

15. Non-identification with son etc. - Excessive love towards all these is an intense form of attachment with them so much so one's own material happiness or otherwise is equated with the happiness or otherwise of the other.
16. Constant even-mindedness - Equanimity under all circumstances and conditions, desirable or undesirable, is a sign of knowledge.

**mayi chaananyayogena bhaktiravyabhicharinee
viviktadesha sevitwam aratir janasamsadi // 13.11 //**

Unswerving devotion unto Me through constant meditation on non-separation, resorting to solitude, aversion to the society of men

If one has developed the virtues mentioned in the previous verses, he would conserve in himself a vast energy which should be directed through proper channels for self-unfoldment. This is explained here.

17. Unswerving devotion to Me - Devotion to The Lord should be of single point concentration without any thought of other objects.
18. Yoga of non-separation - Undivided attention and enthusiasm in the mind of the devotee.
19. Such an integrated mind and steady contemplation is not possible unless there is a conducive environment which is suggested in two ways viz. a. To resort to solitary places and b. To develop a distaste for the crowded society life.

The implication is to live alone in oneself away from the maddening crowd. This is natural because whenever the mind is pre-occupied with an ideal it loses all its contacts with the outside world; thereafter the seeker lives in himself in a cave of his own experiences, as a solitary man walking alone in the world. He hates the crowd of other thoughts entering in his mind. However, these terms are not to be understood as physical aversion to the society in general and escapism into solitude.

**adhyaatma jnaana nityatwam tattwa jnaanaartha darshanam
etajjnaanamiti proktam ajnaanam yadatonyathaa //13.12 //**

Constancy in the Knowledge of the Self, insight into the object of the knowledge of Truth; this is declared to be knowledge and what is opposed to it is ignorance.

In this concluding verse of the section explaining the various essential qualifications in a seeker, the Lord adds two more items viz. constancy in Self knowledge and understanding the end of true knowledge.

20. Constancy in Self-knowledge: The knowledge of the Self is to be lived and not merely learnt. If the Self is everywhere and is real, then the seeker should try to

live as the Self in his personality layers. This consistency of living the spiritual knowledge in all contacts with the world outside is one of the practices a seeker should always keep up. Knowledge includes practice of the moral virtues.

21. Understanding the end of True Knowledge: To keep the vision of the goal always before us adds enthusiasm in all our activities. Thus Liberation from all our imperfections and limitations is the goal to be aspired for by all spiritual seekers.
22. All that is contrary to it is ignorance: Qualities such as pride, hypocrisy, cruelty, impatience, insincerity and the like are all ignorance and therefore should be avoided as tending to the perpetuation of *samsara*.

These traits described from Verse 8 to Verse 12 are declared to be the true 'knowledge' because they are conducive to the realization of the Self. These qualities are said to be the 'knowledge' because once they have been fully developed the mind gets matured enough to reach the goal of Pure knowledge of the Self.

PURE KNOWLEDGE

**jneyam yattat pravakshyaami yajjnaatwaamritam ashnute
anaadimatparam brahma na sattannaasaduchyate // 13.13 //**

I will now describe that which has to be known; knowing which one attains to immortality, the beginningless Supreme Brahman, called neither existent nor non-existent.

After explaining in the previous five verses the various auxiliary causes of knowledge, The Lord promises here that He will explain what is to be known by this knowledge. Although He says He will explain what is to be known, He does not do so directly but gives an elaborate description of what the result would be of such knowledge. This is because the glorification of the result of the knowledge would instill greater desire in the seeker to realize it.

Knowledge by which one attains the Immortal: Mortality is related to matter. If the Immortal Spirit identifies itself with matter It suffers the imaginary sense of finitude and mortality. But if the real nature of the Spirit is discovered in itself the concept of finitude and death disappears and the sense of immortality dawns. To realize the Spiritual Nature is the goal and meditation with the qualities described above is the means.

Beginningless Supreme Brahman: Beginning can occur with reference to a particular time. If time itself is a created factor there cannot be any beginning. Therefore Brahman which is substratum for all must be existent even before time. Thus the Supreme, the Brahman, is always considered 'beginningless'.

Neither Existent nor Non-Existent: The Supreme Consciousness, being the very perceiving principle cannot be perceived. With reference to it everything is an object and It is the one subject. Since It cannot be perceived It is said to be non-existent, a Non-

Being. But because Truth cannot be defined as non-existent, It can be defined only as neither Being nor Non-Being.

Sankara says the Brahman cannot be existent (Sat) as it belongs to no category or class such as man, animal etc., nor does it have any qualities such as whiteness, blackness etc. But at the same time It shows Itself to be not non-existent (asat) by manifesting itself through living bodies.

The concepts of being and non-being are the work of human intellectual judgment .The Consciousness that illumines these judgments is the Self. As the illuminator and the illumined cannot be one and the same, the one subject, Brahman, as opposed to all the objects cannot be either existent or non-existent because existence and non-existence are two types of thoughts both of which are illumined by the Self. Hence Brahman is neither `being' nor `non-being'.

The following verses describe this all pervading nature of the knower of the field.

**sarvatah paanipaadam tat sarvato'kshishiromukham
sarvatah shrutimalloke sarvamaavritya tishtathi // 13.14 //**

With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere he exists in the world, enveloping all.

Hands and feet etc everywhere suggest the Principle of Consciousness functioning behind them all. The functioning of all the parts of the body in every human being is based on the Life Principle. The functions of perception, feeling and thinking are carried out only so long as there is life in the body. Life is said to be everywhere and hence the Principle of Consciousness exists pervading all. This Consciousness behind every living being, that which is common to all, is *Paramatman, Para Brahman*.

As the one subject of all objects of experience, He is said to envelop all and have hands and feet, ears and eyes everywhere. Without the seeing light there is no experience at all. The Supreme has got two aspects. As for example so long as one is associated with an Organization while in service he is called a Manager or President or Director etc. Once he retires from service, although he loses all his designations he does not become a zero, but continues to remain a human being as he was earlier. Similarly, when the Self is associated with the modes of nature, it is called Kshetrajna; when It is released from these, It is called the Paramatman or the Supreme Self.

**sarvendriyagunaabhaasam sarvendriyavivarjitam
asaktam sarvabhricchaiva nirgunam gunabhoktru cha // 13.15 //**

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

The Self in us functioning through the sense organs looks as though It possesses all sense organs. But the sense organs decay and perish while the Consciousness which functions through them and which provides each of them with its own individual faculty is Eternal and Changeless just as electricity is not the light in the bulb and yet when it functions through the bulb it looks as if it were light.

The relationship of unattached support can be explained as follows. Waves are not the ocean but the ocean supports all the waves in as much as there can be no waves without the ocean. Cotton is in the cloth but cloth is not the cotton. But it is the cotton in the cloth that supports the cloth. Similarly the world of plurality is not the Consciousness but it is the Consciousness that supports the world of multiplicities.

The influences which govern the human minds are called Gunas or Qualities. They are Sattwa (Unactivity), Rajas (Activity) and Tamas (Inactivity). A live mind alone can experience these influences. But Life is the illuminator of these influences. Thus Consciousness conditioned by the mind is Jiva, the Ego and that is the experiencer of the Gunas. Unconditioned by the mind, Consciousness in itself is 'Its own nature', 'It is the Absolute'.

Thus the Self, the Absolute, is beyond sense organs, mind and intellect, detached from everything and without any relation to the various Gunas. But the same Self conditioned by the sense organs looks as though It possess all these sense organs, It is the sustainer of them all and It is the experiencer of all the Gunas.

**bahirantashcha bhootaanaam acharam chameva cha
sookshmatwaat tadavijneyam doorastham chaantike cha tat // 13.16 //**

'That' is without and within (all) beings, is the unmoving and also the moving; is too subtle to be known; is far away and yet is near.

The all pervasiveness of the Consciousness is indicated here.

Without and within all beings - Consciousness is present in body, mind and intellect and also outside these equipments just as sound waves converted into electric waves are present even where there are no radio sets to receive them.

Unmoving and moving - All that moves by itself is classified as alive and that which has no motion in itself is inert. As Consciousness is all pervasive and all encompassing it cannot move within itself and hence It is unmoving. Yet when Consciousness is conditioned by the equipments through which it functions it looks as if it were moving. Hence it is said to be moving. When we sit in a moving train we feel we are moving although we are only sitting i.e. when we are conditioned by a moving train we feel as if we were moving. So also Consciousness looks as if it were moving when conditioned by moving things.

Although without Consciousness no activity is ever possible none is able to perceive It, feel It or intellectually comprehend It. This is because of its subtle nature. Grosser the thing more it is perceptible. Subtle nature makes comprehension difficult.

Near and far : The concept of distance-nearness and farness- arises only in respect of conditioned things or those that which has limitations in terms of space or volume etc.

When a thing is all pervasive and exists everywhere the question of its being near or far does not arise; such things are both near and far. Consciousness is far because of its Absolute nature and yet it is near because of the existence of the living beings with shapes and forms through whom it functions.

**avibhaktam cha bhooteshu vibhaktamiva cha sthitam
bhootabhartru cha tajjneyam grasishnu prabhavishnu cha // 13.17 //**

He is undivided, yet He exists as if divided among beings; He is to be known as the supporter of beings; He destroys them and creates them afresh.

Undivided yet divided: Paramatman is all pervading and yet it individualizes as special manifestation only at points where equipments are available just as electricity manifests as light only at the point of filament in the bulb. Although space is one entity it looks divided as room space, pot space etc.

Supports all, destroys all and creates all: The Ocean is a supporter of waves, waves are born in the ocean and yet the same ocean destroys all waves. The Truth or Self is the substratum on which the world of plurality is projected by the deluded mind and intellect and when we go beyond the mind and intellect the vision of *samsar* gets swallowed up in the tranquility of the Self.

**vyotishaamapi tajjyotistamasah paramuchyate
jnaanam jneyam jnaanagamyam hriddi sarvasya vishtitam // 13.18 //**

He, the light of all lights, is said to be beyond darkness. As Knowledge, the object of knowledge, the goal of knowledge He is seated in the hearts of all.

Since the Consciousness in us brings our various experiences within our understanding, it is compared to light. To see an object it should be illumined by the light. Similarly to cognize the outer world experiences there must be light within us to illumine our emotions and thoughts that arise in us.

This light of wisdom by which we become aware of our own mental and intellectual conditions is called the Light of the Soul or the Self or the Consciousness. The Self is said to be the light of all lights because without Consciousness even the sun which has immeasurable light within itself cannot be perceived.

Beyond Darkness: If the sun were to shine in a location all the twenty four hours, the concept of day and night or brightness and darkness loses its meaning because the question of darkness appearing anytime does not arise and it is sunshine all throughout. In this situation the sun is said to know no darkness. Similarly, Consciousness is beyond the concept of darkness; it is the Light Absolute; where there is consciousness there cannot be any darkness or night. Moreover the principle of Consciousness makes us aware not only the light but also the darkness. That which illuminates both light and darkness must be beyond the experience of light and darkness. Hence the Self is said to transcend even darkness.

Knowledge (*Jnaanam*), the thing to be known (*Jneyam*) and the goal of all knowledge (*Jnaana gamyam*): This is the final experience to be gained for which groundwork has been done from verses 7 to 18. This is the point of concentration. It is the Consciousness that transcends all our experiences and illumines our life. It is the very goal of all spiritual endeavors at all times and at all places.

Dwelling in the hearts of all: The Lord says that Consciousness, the Infinite, dwells in the hearts of all. Heart does not mean the blood supplying physical part of the body. It means the mental area from where all noble thoughts emanate. In a tranquil and pious atmosphere when the intellect contemplates upon the `Light' that is beyond darkness, all pervading, subtle, It can be realized and hence it is stated to dwell in everybody's heart.

Many of these passages are quotations from the Upanishads. Ref: *Svetasvatara Up.III.8 and 16; Isa Up. 5; Mundaka Up. III. 1. 7; Brihadaranyaka Up. IV.4.16.*

THE FRUITS OF KNOWLEDGE

**iti kshetram tathaa jnaanam jneyam choktam samaasatah
madbhakta etadvijnaaya madbhaavaayopapadyate // 13.19 //**

*Thus the Field as well as the Knowledge and the object of Knowledge have been stated.
My devotee who understands this enters into My Being.*

Sri Krishna concludes the theme of His discourse so far by saying those who seek the light through devotion to Him reach Him. Devotion here implies not only emotional surrender unto The Lord but intellectual apprehension of the Truth, the Self, through a correct understanding of the Field and the Knower of the Field. One who is able to recognize the one Sri Krishna as the vitalizing Consciousness Principle in all fields of matter envelopments, he is the true devotee who as The Lord says `enters into His Being', attains liberation or release from birth and death.

The `Field' is described in verses 6 & 7, `Knowledge' is described in verses 8-12 and the `Knowable' is described in verses 13-18. One who understands the Field, knowledge and the object of knowledge knows the whole doctrine of the Vedas and the Bhagavad Gita.

Concepts and Issues

Sri Krishna now describes the Kshetra (Field) and the Ksherajna (Knower of the Field), the terms being used in philosophic sense. The body is the Field and the Self or the Soul is the Knower of the Field. Details of the two have been described by the sages in several works. In the ultimate analysis Sri Krishna is the Knower of the Field in all the Fields.

The Five elements, ego-sense, intellect, sense-organs, mind, objects of the senses, pleasure and pain - all these belong to the Field. Jnana or Knowledge consists in cultivating certain virtues like humility, simplicity, non-violence, uprightness, service to preceptor, purity, self control, and detachment, absence of egoism, equanimity and devotion to Sri Krishna. Resorting to the lonely places, avoiding crowds, steady devotion to spiritual wisdom also helps in getting knowledge.

Then Jneya or that which is to be known viz. Brahman is described by knowing which one gets immortality. It is without beginning and cannot be defined as either existence or non-existence. It is everywhere. It pervades everything. Though It reveals Itself through the functions of the senses, It is without sense organs. It is inside and outside of all beings. It is the light of all the lights. It is the knowledge as well as the known and is established in the hearts of all.

Live as the Gita Teaches You to Live

In this Chapter the Lord teaches us to be a witness, with discriminative understanding that everything in the Universe is a product of Prakriti and the Self or Pure Consciousness is our destiny.

Points to Ponder

1. Why the body is called the Field? What are its constituents?
2. Who is Knower of the Field? What are His characteristics?
3. What is Knowledge? What is knowable?
4. What are the Spirit and the Matter?
5. What is the benefit of knowing the difference between the Field and Knower of the Field?

Next time we will proceed from the Verse 13.20

HARIH OM

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 13 (Part-2)
Kshetra Kshetrajna Vibhaaga Yogah:
Yoga of Distinction between
The Field and the Knower of the Field
T.N.Sethumadhavan

Preamble

The two prakritis of the Lord, the higher and the lower, were discussed in the Seventh Chapter. It has been said that all created beings are born of them. (7.6). This topic dealing with Prakriti, matter and Purusha, spirit are elaborated in this section. Matter functions with several modifications and qualities while spirit functioning through them all is but one and the same. The union of spirit with matter produces a living being. The supreme Self, being the same, expresses differently in different individuals.

The path to Self-realization begins with action, passing through knowledge, it ends in meditation. Those who cannot pursue the path all by themselves can still reach the Self by surrendering to and following a spiritual master.

Spiritual growth is marked by recognizing the homogeneous principle in the heterogeneous variety of beings. Perceiving the Imperishable in the perishable world, the seeker realizes Brahman as the substratum in the diversified existence of all beings. He becomes one with Brahman.

The supreme Self within does not act; nor is It tainted by the actions of beings. It remains ever immaculate like space which is never polluted by the different objects occupying it. He who recognizes the supreme Self in the manifold beings is endowed with *jnanachakshu*, the Eye of Wisdom, with which he perceives the Supreme.

The Text

NATURE AND SPIRIT

**prakritim purusham chaiva viddhyanaadee ubhaavapi
vikaaraamshcha gunaamshchaiva viddhi prakritisambhavaan // 13.20 //**

Know you that Prakriti and Purusha are both without beginning and know you also that all forms and gunas are born of Prakriti.

In Chapter 7 Sri Krishna said that His Prakriti falls under two categories viz. the Higher and the Lower. In this Chapter both these are explained as the Knower of the Field (Kshetrajna, Purusha) and the Field (Kshetra, prakriti). It was also stated earlier that both the Higher and Lower Matter together constitute the source of creation. The same thought is repeated here as the Field and the Knower of the Field together form the origin of all beings.

Prakriti, Matter or nature is inert. Matter is that out of which all forms (from intelligence down to the gross body) and gunas (qualities such as sattva, rajas and tamas, which manifest themselves in the form of pleasure, pain delusion so on,) come into existence. All changes or modifications are related to Matter. Prakriti is maya , the sakti or power of the Lord. It is the cause of the manifestation of the relative universe.

Since Prakriti or maya is the eternal source of all forms and gunas, Brahman (Purusha) remains ever changeless and immutable. Purusha, Self, Soul, Spirit, is the changeless substratum in the presence of which all changes take place.

Matter (Prakriti) and Spirit (Purusha) are both beginningless. They are the two aspects of Iswara, the Lord. As the Lord is eternal so also is His two aspects Matter and Spirit. The play of Matter and Spirit causes the origin, preservation and dissolution of the Universe.

FUNCTIONS OF PRAKRITI AND PURUSHA

**kaaryakaaranakartrutwe hetuh prakritiruchyate
purushah sukhaduhkhaanaam bhoktritwe heturuchyate // 13.21 //**

Prakriti is said to be the cause of the generation of the body and the organs and Purusha is said to be the cause of the experience of pleasure and pain.

Prakriti (nature) is the material from which the body and the sense organs are produced. The five elements out of which the body is made and the five sense-objects are included under the term 'body' or 'karya' used in the Verse. The sense organs are thirteen namely five organs of perception, five organs of action, the mind, intellect (buddhi), and I-consciousness (ahamkara). Pleasure, pain, delusion and the rest, which are born of three gunas of prakriti, are included under the term organs or 'karana' since they cannot exist independently of the sense-organs.

Purusha and Prakriti are stated to be the cause of samsara or phenomenal existence. Prakriti transforms itself into body and senses, as also into pleasure, pain and so on and Purusha experiences pleasure and pain. This union between Purusha and Prakriti makes relative life possible. Eventhough the Purusha, the Soul, identifies Himself with the body and appears to experience pleasure and pain, yet in reality He remains unchanging. It is this apparent experience which constitutes His illusory world or samsara and which makes Him a samsari or phenomenal being.

It should be clearly understood that although the term Purusha used here is synonymous with jiva, the individualized soul, or Kshetrajna, the Knower of the Field, or *bhokta*, the enjoyer, it should not be confused with the Paramatman or Brahman or the Highest Self. The term Purusha is used here merely as an intelligent principle and a conditioned being. Again, this should not be construed that there are two separate purushas; the same one purusha is seen from two different angles. In the Gita, no distinction is made between the knower of the Field and the Supreme Lord, Paramatman, Brahman.

This should be kept in view when we study Chapter 15.

HOW DOES IMMUTABLE ATMAN EXPERIENCE PLEASURE AND PAIN?

**purushah prakritistho hi bhungte prakritijaan gunaan
kaaranam gunasango'sya sadasadyoni janmasu // 13.22 //**

Purusha seated in Prakriti, experiences the qualities (gunas) born of Prakriti. It is attachment to these qualities is the cause of His birth in good and evil wombs.

Purusha seated in Prakriti: When the knower of the Field (Purusha) identifies himself with the Field (Prakriti), he becomes the experiencer.

He experiences the qualities born of Prakriti: Purusha identifies with the body and the senses which are the effects of Prakriti (Matter). Pleasure and pain, heat and cold etc. arise out of Matter envelopments. The experiences of Matter become the experiences of the Spirit because of the latter's contact with the former. Purusha not only experiences the sorrows and joys of life but develops attachment with them which is the cause of its birth in good or evil wombs.

Having identified with the Field (World of objects), the knower of the Field (Purusha) develops attachment to the Field, the delusory *samsar* and finds himself as though he has forgotten his real nature. Thus this ignorance (*Avidya*) and attachment to the Field are the two causes due to which the *Satchidananda* has become a miserable *Samsarin*. The re-discovery of the Self and realizing our real nature would therefore be through detachment from the Field. *Vairagya* and *Viveka* are the means for such rediscovery.

Avidya or ignorance and *kama* or attachment to the *gunas*, together constitute the cause of *samsara* or relative existence. The aspirant seeking liberation, should avoid them both. Ignorance is to be removed by knowledge, the knowledge of the Field and the Knower of the Field as imparted in the beginning of this Chapter. Attachment is to be destroyed by vairagya or dispassion. The injunction delivered in the Gita is to renounce the illusory world.

REAL NATURE OF PURUSHA

**upadrashtaanumantaa cha bhartaa bhoktaa maheshwarah
paramaatmeti chaapyukto dehe'smin purushah parah // 13.23 //**

The Supreme Purusha in this body is also called the Witness, the Approver, the Supporter, the Experiencer, the Sovereign Lord and the Supreme Self.

As a contrast to the deluded knower of the Field, Purusha, discussed in the previous Verse, there must be the Pure Spirit or unconditioned Purusha also. Hence there must be knowledge which is not conditioned by the field although it may look conditioned. Sri Krishna thus mentions here two Purushas viz. the Lower one and the Higher one. The Lower Purusha is the knower of the Field and the Higher one is Pure Consciousness unconditioned by the Prakriti. Both of these function in this body.

The Supreme Self, Pure Consciousness, is described as Spectator, a silent witness, *upadrashtaa*, when it sees evil actions performed. When noble actions take place it is referred to as the Approver, *anumantha*. When noble actions are done in a spirit of surrender to the Lord, the Supreme is referred to as *bharta*, the fulfiller. The individual in his Eternal Conscious state initiates all actions and reaps the fruit. Therefore, He is referred to as the Experiencer, *bhokta*.

Finally it is stated that the Higher Self, *paramaatma*, the Sovereign Lord, *maheshwarah*, is in this body itself.

This theme will be again discussed in Chapter 15.17.

RESULT OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

**ya evam vetti purusham prakritim cha gunaih saha
sarvathaa vartamano'pi na sa bhooyobhijaayate // 13.24 //**

He who thus knows the Purusha and Prakriti along with the gunas is not born again, in whatsoever condition he may be.

He who has realized in himself

- that which is the matter, prakriti
- that which is the Spirit, purusha, and who understands
- how the Supreme Spirit gets identified with matter and behaves as Purusha, the knower of the Field
- as also the mysteries of the Gunas under the influence of which the body equipments function is the one called 'Man of Wisdom'. Such a person frees himself from the cycle of births and deaths whatever may be his conduct.

DIFFERENT ROADS TO SALVATION

**dhyaanenaatmani pashyanti kechidaatmaanamaatmanaa
anye saankhyena yogena karmayogena chaapare // 13.25 //**

Some by meditation behold the Self in the Self by the Self, others by the path of knowledge (Jnaana Yoga) and still others by Karma Yoga or path of works.

Realization of the Self is the goal of the spiritual seeking and many paths are prescribed for the purpose keeping in view the differences in the mental and intellectual capabilities of the seekers.

By meditation some behold the Self: Meditation is defined as withdrawing the hearing, seeing, and the functioning of the other senses into the mind away from sound, form and other sense objects; next withdrawing the mind into the inmost Intelligence; and then contemplating the Intelligence with undeviating concentration. Meditation is continuous thinking and the mind of one absorbed in it dwells on the ideal uninterruptedly.

Through meditation the seeker directs his flow of thought of the Self in a continuous and unbroken manner like an unbroken stream of flowing oil when pouring from one vessel to another. Through concentration the senses are withdrawn into the mind and are not allowed to run after their respective sensual objects. Keeping it thus under control, the mind itself is made to abide in the Self through constant meditation on the Self.

The mind is purified by meditation. A pure mind will not have any attachment to sense objects and naturally moves towards the Self. The seekers of this type have a very high degree of detachment from sense objects (Vairagya) and sense of discrimination to distinguish the Permanent from the Impermanent. (Viveka). This type of individuals belongs to the highest class.

Sankhya Yoga or Jnaana Yoga: The second path meant for those who do not have the steadiness of the mind and intellect is the study of the Shastras. The term `Sankhya' means arriving at philosophical conclusions through logical thoughts. The study of Shastras and reflections upon them is called Yoga which will lead one to deeper conviction of the goal and steadiness of mind to realize it.

Karma Yoga: The third one is for those who cannot even study and reflect on shastras due to their inner limitations. Such a person surrenders his actions and their fruits to the Lord. This produces purity of mind which leads to the knowledge of the Self.

The paths of meditation, knowledge and work are prescribed to cater to the temperaments of different classes of people.

WHAT ABOUT PEOPLE OF LEAST UNDERSTANDING?

**anye tvevamajaanantah shrutwaanyebhya upaasate
te'pi chaa'titarantyeva mrityum shrutiparaayanaah // 13.26 //**

Others also, ignorant of this (these paths of Yoga), worship having heard of it from others; they too cross beyond death, by their devotion to what they have heard as the Supreme Refuge.

Three main paths - Yoga of meditation, Yoga of knowledge and Yoga of action- were referred to in the previous verse. In this verse Yoga of worship is described. This path is shown to those who could not adopt any of the aforesaid three methods.

Some people listen with intense faith to the teachings of the spiritual preceptors regarding the Self. Solely depending upon their advice and worship according to their advice they attain immortality. Some study books and adhere with faith the teachings contained therein and live according to them. They also overcome death. Whichever path one follows, one eventually attains liberation from birth and death. The various paths exist only to suit the aspirants of different temperaments and equipments, the ultimate goal being the same.

Here death does not mean what happens to the physical body but the principle of change. When we identify with the body, the experiences can only be of the finite. To experience the Infinite is to enter the state of immortality which is beyond death.

**yaavat sanjaayate kinchit sattwam sthaavarajangamam
kshetrakshetrajnasyogaat tadviddhi bharatarshabha // 13.27 //**

Wherever any being is born, the unmoving or the moving, know you, O Best of the Bharata, that it is from the union between the Field and the Knower of the Field.

All life is commerce between Self and not-Self. - Dr.S.Radhakrishnan.

The union between the Field and the Knower of the Field is not of any physical kind or of any material nature but it is of mutual superimposition. It is illusory, confounding the one with the other. In every superimposition a delusion is recognized upon the substratum just like a ghost on the post. Not only all the characteristics of a ghost are projected upon the post but the post lends its existence to the non-existent ghost. As a result of their mutual union we find that the non-existent ghost comes into existence and the existing post gives place to non-existent ghost.

This trick of the human mind is called mutual superimposition which is known in Vedanta as *adhyasa*. This means false superimposition of one thing upon the other. This superimposition is due to *maya* or absence of discrimination. This unreal relationship, created by ignorance, conjures up before our vision the manifold phenomenon of the relative material world. When this confusion is cleared, bondage terminates.

In the Pure Consciousness or Supreme Soul, Paramatman or Brahman, there is no Field of the Matter. But when the Spirit starts playing in the Field it becomes the Knower of the Field (Purusha). When Purusha works in Prakriti the combination brings forth the entire phenomenal universe consisting of the moving and the unmoving. The insentient body is mistaken for the sentient Self and vice versa. This illusion disappears when one realizes the real knowledge of the Self and when one knows the distinction between the Field and the Knower of the Field.

**samam sarveshu bhooteshu tishthantam parameshwaram
vinashyatswavinashyantam yah pashyati sa pashyati // 13.28 //**

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

The substratum that supports all is the Supreme Lord remaining the same in all beings. Everything in this phenomenal world is subject to change and modifications - birth, growth, decay and death. The Changeless Consciousness that supports all changes is the Principle that illumines the changing world of plurality just as gold is the changeless factor in different types of ornaments which are always made and destroyed to make new ones of different types. The shape and size of ornaments change but the changeless factor

in them all is gold. He who recognizes the harmony of Universal Spirit in all things, from the highest deity to the grain of sand, sees and becomes universal. The same divine spirit dwells in all. The difference between one object and another from the relative standpoint lies in the degree of manifestation of the Spirit in it. In a Saint, the Spirit is highly manifested while in a lowly object the spirit is hidden.

**samam pashyan hi sarvatra samavasthitameeshwaram
na hinastyaatmanaatmaanam tato yaati paraam gatim // 13.29 //**

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

He does not destroy the Self by the self: In Chapter 6.5 & 6 it was explained as to when the self becomes the enemy of the Self. Whenever the lower egocentric personality is not available for guidance by the higher wisdom the lower becomes the enemy for the higher in us. Such an ignorant man destroys the Self by identifying himself with the body and the modifications of the mind and by not seeing the immortal Self in all beings.

In an individual who recognizes and experiences the one Parameswara everywhere the lower cannot overshadow the higher. Such a sage does not destroy the Self by the self. To rediscover the spiritual Reality, the Supreme Lord, in this world of change and sorrow is to end all agitations.

He goes to the highest goal: The mutual conflict between the lower and the higher personality is due to non-apprehension of the Reality or due to mis-apprehension arising out of non-apprehension. Because of this lack of understanding, we do not recognize the one Eternal Divine everywhere and identify ourselves with the body and the mind and thereby feel that they alone are real. Consequently, we come to the conclusion that sensuality, materialistic pursuits and selfish satisfactions are the only goals worth pursuing in life. Hence The Lord says that when both these non-apprehension and mis-apprehension are ended that Absolute experience is the experience of the highest goal and therefore, 'He goes to the highest'.

**prakrityaiva cha karmaani kriyamaanaani sarvashah
yah pashyati tathaatmaanam akartaaram sa pashyati // 13.30 //**

He sees who sees that all actions are performed by Prakriti alone and likewise that the Self is not the doer.

Prakriti alone performs all actions: Actions depend upon the quality of the matter. If the mind is evil, actions arising out of it cannot be good. The Self is perfect and there is no desire in it. Where there are no desires, there is no action. He who recognizes the Imperishable amidst the perishable is the right perceiver. He alone sees who sees. The true Self is not the doer but only the witness. It is the spectator, not the actor. Actions affect the mind and understanding and not the Self.

REALIZATION OF THE UNITY OF EXISTENCE LEADS TO THE ATTAINMENT OF BRAHMAN

**yadaa bhootaprithagbhaavam ekastham anupashyati
tata eva cha vistaaram brahma sampadyate tadaa // 13.31 //**

When a man sees the whole variety of beings as centered in the One and from That One alone they spread out, he then attains Brahman.

To know that the Self is the ultimate Truth behind names and forms is only half knowledge. It can become complete only when we understand how the multiplicity of names and forms arise from the Self and spread to become the Universe. When the variety of nature and its development are traced to the Eternal One, we assume eternity. He realizes the all pervading nature of the Self, because the cause of all limitation has been destroyed by the knowledge of unity with Brahman.

The Chhandogya Upanishad (VII.xxvi.1) says “From the Self is life, from the Self is desire, from the Self is love, from the Self is *akasa*, from the Self is light, from the Self are the waters, from the Self is the manifestation and disappearance, from the Self is the soul”.

**anaaditwaan nirgunatwaat paramaatmaayam avyayah
shareerasthopi kaunteya na karoti na lipyate // 13.32 //**

Being without beginning and being devoid of qualities, the Supreme Self, imperishable, though dwelling in the body, O Kaunteya, neither acts nor is tainted.

The Spirit identifying itself with the Field becomes the knower of the Field (Purusha) and it is this individualized ego that acts and accomplishes.

‘Without beginning’ means ‘no cause’. Every cause itself becomes an effect and an effect is the cause in a changed form. Therefore all effects are liable to change and that which changes is perishable. The Supreme Self being an uncaused cause for all that has been created has no beginning.

Having no quality or guna: That which has no change cannot have any quality since that which has qualities are substances and all substances are perishable.

Imperishable: The process of change occurring in the properties and qualities of a thing is a phenomenon of its decay. That which has no quality cannot change and that which is changeless cannot perish. Paramatman is thus Imperishable. Therefore the Beginningless, Qualityless, Imperishable Supreme Self, Paraamatman, though lives in physical body and activates the inert matter (Field) around each embodied creature into life, by Itself and in Itself, It does not act.

Neither acts nor is tainted: As the Paramatman is not the doer of any action he is not affected by the fruit of action.

A question arises here that if the Spirit dwelling in the body does not act and is not affected by the result of action, then, who is the performer or doer or agent of action and the reaper of its fruit? The answer to this riddle is that it is Prakriti that acts (Chapter 5.14). Through illusion arises the idea of the action, the doer, and the result of action. No action really exists in the Supreme Lord. From the standpoint of Reality there exists neither good nor evil. When the knowledge of the unity of the Lord and the universe is veiled by ignorance, there arise the ideas of the pairs of opposites, and also the idea of action, characterized by agency, instrument and result. e.g. from the standpoint of the desert, there is neither mirage nor water as everything is desert only; from the standpoint of the ocean there are neither waves nor foam as everything is ocean only, from the standpoint of gold, there is neither a bangle nor a necklace as everything is gold only.

This is one of the most difficult concepts in Vedanta and the seeker must reflect on this deeply to grasp it. The Lord gives some examples to illustrate the actionlessness of the Self.

**yataa sarvagatam saukshmyaadaakaasham nopalipyate
sarvatraavasthito dehe tathaatmaa nopalipyate // 13.33 //**

As the all pervading ether is not tainted, because of its subtlety, so too the Self that is present in every body does not suffer any taint.

As the all pervading Akasa (ether, space) is not soiled: Akasa means the concept of pure space. It is the subtlest of all gross elements and hence pervades everything that is grosser than it. Space being subtle, it allows everything to remain in it and yet nothing that it contains can contaminate it. The Supreme Self which is the cause of the very Akasa and therefore is subtler than Akasa. Hence It pervades all and nothing pervades It. It cannot be contaminated by anything that exists or is happening in the world of plurality.

As the waters of the mirage cannot drench the desert, the world of plurality-the domain of matter and its activities-cannot contaminate the Eternal. The Self, though permeates and pervades the whole body, is not soiled by its virtuous or vicious actions just as space is not dirtied by the things accommodated under it.

**yathaa prakaashayatyekah kritsnam lokamimam ravih
kshetram kshetree tathaa kritsnam prakaashayati bhaarata // 13.34 //**

Just as the one sun illuminates the whole world, so also The Lord of the Field (Paramatman) illumines the whole world, O Bharata.

The exact relationship of Consciousness, the Eternal Principle of Life, with matter and its various expressions is explained here. The example given by The Lord for the purpose is the one sun which illumines the entire world at all times. Just as the sun, the Consciousness merely illumines the world of objects, the body, the mind and the intellect.

Lighting of the world by the sun is not an activity undertaken by him for achieving any purpose. On the other hand light itself is the very nature of the sun and in his light everything gets illumined. Similarly, the nature of Consciousness is awareness and in Its presence everything becomes known i.e., illumined. The sun illumines everything, good and bad, beautiful and ugly, virtue and vice etc. So too, in our inner life Consciousness functions through body equipments and illumines them but never gets contaminated by the actions of the body or by the emotions of the mind or by the thoughts of the intellect.

**kshetrakshetrjnayorevamantaram jnaanachakshushaa
bhootaprakritimoksham cha ye vidur yaanti te param // 13.35 //**

They, who by the eye of wisdom perceive the distinction between Kshetra and Kshetrajna and of the liberation of the being from Prakriti, go to the Supreme.

It was explained that the Spirit is the illuminator. It cannot be tainted by the qualities of the illumined. Sri Krishna now concludes that man's life is fulfilled only when he with his discrimination meditates upon and realizes the constitution of and relationship between the Field, the Knower of the Field and the Supreme Self in himself. This can be achieved through the eye of wisdom or intuition which is opened up by meditation, study of scriptures or teachings of the preceptors. One who realizes this is liberated and attains eternal freedom.

Thus it has been very clearly and emphatically laid down in the Bhagavad Gita that the means of deliverance from maya or ignorance are meditation, renunciation and other spiritual disciplines.

**om tat sat iti srimadbhagavadgeetaasu upanishatsu brahma vidyaayaam
yogashaastre sri krishnaarjuna samvaade kshetra kshetrajna vibhaaga yogo 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 Distinction Between The Field and the Knower of the Field

Concepts and Issues

Prakriti (nature, the Field) and Purusha (the being, Knower of the Field) are both beginningless. Purusha being stationed in Prakriti experiences pleasure and pain born out of the Gunas. It is attachment to Gunas that causes transmigration in good or bad births. One who knows the Purusha and Prakriti thus will transcend rebirth.

Those who realize the Atman (Purusha) through the pure mind or through Jnana Yoga or Karma Yoga will transcend mortality. All objects in this world are created out of the conjunction of the Field and the Knower of the Field. Parameswara, the Supreme Lord, exists in all without distinction. One who realizes this fact attains the final goal of life.

It is Prakriti or the Field that acts whereas the Self, though stationed in the body, never acts nor gets tainted. The Knower of the Field, the Self, illumines the Field, the body with consciousness like the sun illuminating the whole world. Those who can understand the difference between the two - The Field and the Knower of the Field- will attain Brahman.

Live as the Gita Teaches You to Live

One should not identify oneself with the functions of one's own mind, intellect, senses and body. One should not confuse one's real nature, Pure Consciousness, with the products of Prakriti.

Points to Ponder

1. Realization of the unity of existence leads to the attainment of Brahman
2. Being without beginning and being devoid of qualities, the Supreme Self, though dwelling in the body neither acts nor is tainted.

Next time we will take up Chapter 14

HARIH OM