

Swamiji's 2026 New Year Message – Self-Knowledge (Ātma-vidyā)

Self-knowledge is the central subject matter of our scriptures, the Vedas. The Vedas are broadly divided into two parts. The initial portion deals with Dharma Śāstra—guidelines on how to live our lives in harmony with the world. The final portion, known as Vedānta, presents spiritual teachings primarily in the form of the Upaniṣads.

There are several Upaniṣads, most of them structured as dialogues between a teacher and a student. The Upaniṣadic students discerned the fundamental problem of humanity. This problem is martyatvam—mortality, or being subject to the principle of time. Because of time, everything is constantly changing. These changes bring both favorable and unfavorable conditions, and unfortunately, their nature is unpredictable and unknown. As a result, life often feels as though it is moving in darkness. We feel that we are not fully in control of ourselves or our future, which creates a constant sense of vulnerability. Anxiety and stress regarding the future of ourselves, our friends, and our family naturally follow. All these are consequences of change.

In the first part of life, we experience stress and anxiety. As life progresses, old age arrives along with various diseases, ultimately leading to death. These are the most explicit expressions of mortality. Over time, stress and anxiety intensify into fear and panic. Stress, anxiety, and fear are universal problems, all rooted in mortality. Another word for this condition is saṃsāra. Although we live with this problem daily, we rarely attempt to solve it. The students of the Upaniṣads recognized this problem clearly and sought a remedy.

The remedy discovered by the Upaniṣads is the recognition of the opposite of mortality–immortality. This immortal principle is called Ātma, and the knowledge of this truth is known as Ātma-vidyā. Ātma-vidyā enables us to face mortality without stress, fear, or panic. Many Upaniṣadic teachings are presented through dialogues between a teacher and a student to communicate this knowledge.

In the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, there is a dialogue between Yājñavalkya and Maitreyi. Yājñavalkya informs Maitreyi of his decision to take sannyāsa and renounces all his material possessions. He asks his wife Maitreyi to share it with his other wife. Maitreyi, however, asks whether wealth can give immortality. Upon learning that it cannot, she chooses knowledge over possessions and asks for Ātma-vidyā.

In the Kaṭha Upaniṣad, Naciketā seeks this same knowledge from Yama Dharma Rāja. Yama tests Naciketā by offering wealth, pleasure, and even a kingdom. Naciketā rejects all these, recognizing that none of them can solve the problem of saṃsāra. Pleased with his discernment, Yama teaches him Ātma-vidyā.

Śāstra explains that we have both changing and unchanging aspects in our personality. Our personality is divided into four layers:

1. Outer layer – the visible sthūla śarīram (gross body)
2. Middle layer – the subtle, invisible inner personality
3. Karmic layer – the causal body (kāraṇa śarīram), which carries the results of past actions

These three layers are subject to arrival and departure. At the time of death, we shed the outer layer. At the time of pralaya, the total dissolution, even the subtle and causal

layers resolve.

Behind these changing layers lies the core, the Ātma. The three changing layers are called anātma, while Ātma is immortal and unchanging. Ātma is our true and higher nature. Through spiritual pursuit, we discover this truth and remain anchored in it. One who is firmly established in this knowledge is called a mukta puruṣa.

If I am anchored in immortality, I am no longer disturbed by change. Degeneration, disease, and death—the three “D’s”—belong only to the anātma. When we accept the mortality of the anātma while remaining established in the Ātma, the problem of saṃsāra is resolved. This freedom is called mokṣa, and it is open to everyone, not only to the elderly.

Let self-knowledge (Ātma-vidyā) be our primary goal and New Year resolution for 2026.

Bhagwat Geeta, Class 147 – Chapter 11 Viśvarūpa Darshana Yogaha, Verses 30 to 33



Viśvarūpa consists of everything including time. Time and space are an integral property of creation. Time and space can never be separated from creation, they arise along with creation. When Arjuna experiences the viśvarūpa, he also experiences time principle. This invisible all-pervading time principle or kala tattvam is symbolized by the mouth of the lord. This kala tattvam has twofold power – creation and

destruction. But Arjuna, being in a battlefield, sees only the destruction part of the kala tattvam. If he had seen the totality, creation and destruction, he would have seen the mangalam swaroopam and amangala swaroopam of the Lord. We only have two options – accept the whole as mangalam or reject the whole as amangalam. But we only want to accept the birth as mangalam and not accept the death as mangalam. Either totally embrace the whole world or reject the whole world. As long as you accept only one part and reject the other part, there will be samsara.

Verse 30

Swallowing all the people from all directions with blazing mouths, You repeatedly lick with relish. Filling the entire universe with radiance. Your fierce rays scorch everyone, Oh Lord.

Bagawan doesn't seem to have any sympathy towards people crying for the death of family and friends. But by giving intelligence, Bagawan has given us an opportunity to know what death is. If we do not grow and mature, Bagawan will have no sympathy. Kala tattvam affects all the time – not just at the old age. Arjuna wonders whether Bagawan is extremely cruel. When suffering in life, we all will get this doubt. We may even doubt the existence of Bagawan.

Verse 31

Who are you with this fierce form? Tell me, Oh Supreme Lord! Salutation be to You. Be gracious. I desire to know You, the primal one. Indeed, I do not know Your function.

Arjuna asks who are you – the frightening one or the gracious one? Who is Bagawan and what is your function? Why can't the whole world be beautiful?

Verse 32

The Lord said – I am the mighty Time, the destroyer of the world. I am proceeding to destroy the people here. All the warriors who are arrayed in both the armies will cease to exist even without you.

Bagawan answers that he is kala tattvam. There are two planes in Vedanta, vyāvahārika tattvam and pāramarthika tattvam. With regard to vyāvahārika tattvam either you accept totally or reject it totally. There is no good or bad. You accept both or reject both. You renounce both and death. This requires inner strength. Total acceptance also requires strength. This strength you get only with atma Jñānam.

Partial rejection or acceptance is not acceptable. As vyāvahārika tattvam, Bagawan creates and destroys. Pāramarthika tattvam -in which there is no time and no space and there are no pairs. No good and bad; no death and birth.

Verse 33

Therefore, get up and attain fame. Conquering the enemies, enjoy the prosperous kingdom. Indeed, they have already been killed by Me. Be a mere instrument, Oh Arjuna!

Krishna says the time has come for people on the battlefield to die. Only the means of destruction is not decided, but the end of the people has already been decided by kala tattvam. The option that Arjuna has is to join and do his duty by defeating the enemies and establishing dharma. Arjuna is only an instrument in Bagawan's hand.

When we read in this contest, it looks like he is only an instrument or puppet of the Bagawan. Looks like Bagawan has already decided everything and everything is predetermined. Seems like human beings do not have any choice and do not have any free will. There is only one doer and Bagawan determines everything. This will be the wrong conclusion that we can come to from this verse. Human beings do have free will.



Swamiji's Special Talk: 2020 Sivaratri

Please click on the link below to listen to Swamiji's Talk for 2020 Sivaratri:

Relationship between bakti and jananam

Baghawad Gita, Chapter 14 Summary

Continuing his teachings

Swamiji presented the summary of the chapter today. He said the 14th chapter, like the previous chapter, falls within the third shadkam of the

Bhagavat Gita; the third

group of six chapters and I had

pointed out that in the third shadkam,

Sri Krishna concentrates on Gyana yoga. And therefore we find the topic of Gyana yoga, the essential teachings of the Upanishads,

condensed in these chapters, especially the 13th, 14th and

15th chapters. In the 16th and 17th chapters, we will see later, Sri Krishna deals with Gyana-yoga friendly virtues.

Gyana yoga is the pursuit of self-knowledge or atma Gyanam. Though, these three chapters are relatively small, they are very significant chapters and this is known as Gunathraya vibhaga yoga and in this chapter, Sri Krishna deals with the three gunas as the stepping-stones and through these three gunas he takes us to the gunathitha atma. Using the three gunas as stepping stones and going to the gunathitha atma, is the subject matter of this chapter and therefore, it is called guna thraya vibhaga yoga.

Shlokas

1-4:

And in the first four verses of this chapter, Sri Krishna gives an introduction in which he mentions the subject matter of atma Gyanam as the liberating wisdom and therefore the greatest knowledge. All the other disciplines of knowledge are called apara vidya; inferior knowledge; whereas this is the knowledge, which is called para vidya in the upanishad and raja vidya in the 9th chapter; this knowledge is the greatest knowledge because this alone releases a person from samsara. All the other disciplines of knowledge will make me only smaller and smaller because the more I study I come to know how little I know. So instead of growing bigger in terms of knowledge, I only feel smaller and smaller as I study more, further. This is the only wisdom, which makes me own the fact that, I am Brahman, the biggest. Therefore, Sri Krishna says this is a liberating knowledge, which gives liberation while living and is called jivan-mukti; and it also gives liberation after death, which is then called videh mukti. And by videha mukti we mean freedom from punarjanma or cycle of birth and death.

Thus

having introduced the subject matter, later Sri Krishna gives the foundation

for the teaching and in that foundation he briefly mentions the process of creation.

He points out that God is the cause of the creation, and God consists of two aspects, consciousness aspect and the matter aspect or Chetana and achetana.

In

the 7th chapter, Chetana

tatvam was called para prakrti; achetana tatvam was called apara prakrti.

In

the 13th chapter, Chetana

tatvam was called purusha and achetana tatvam is called prakrtihi.

And

in the upanishads, chetana tatvam is called brahman and the achetana tatvam is called Maya.

These two principles together are called Ishvara and he is anadi and from this Chetana- achetana mishram alone the entire universe has originated, including every individual as well. And from this we can easily infer that every individual also must be a mixture of Chetana – achetana tatvam because as the cause is, so the effect will be. As the parents are so the children will be. So based on the same principle, I, the individual, is also a mixture of purusha and prakrti; brahman and maya; chetanam and achetanam. Otherwise, technically, I am atma-anatma mishraha.

And

from this we can infer that anatma

is a part of the mind, which is born out of prakrti, as such it will have the three gunas, which belong to prakrti.

So prakrti is responsible for the origination of my anatma part and therefore; my anatma part will have three gunas and that anatma part is the body-mind complex, otherwise also called ahamkara. So the body-mind complex is equal to the anatma part is equal to the ahamkara part, which is sagunaha, endowed with the three gunas, because it is a product, originating from the prakrti.

And similarly I have got a purusha aspect also; the chetana aspect also; which is called the atma aspect; which is nirgunam in nature and this nirguna atma is technically called sakshi. **Therefore saguna ahamkara plus nirguna sakshi; Saguna matter plus nirguna consciousness, is the individual.**

Saguna means with guna or properties and nirguna means without guna; or properties or attributes. The pure ahamkara also cannot interact in the world. Pure sakshi also cannot interact in the world. All the interactions are done by the mixture of sakshi + ahamkara.

And the whole aim of this teaching is I should learn to own up more and more of my higher sakshi svarupam, which is

the persistent and permanent nature of mine and I should not be over obsessed with my inferior ahamkara materialistic nature. Not that ahamkara should be neglected, because without ahamkara, pure sakshi cannot transact. So ahamkara is needed; but obsession with ahamkara will lead to all types of problem. And therefore instead of seeing myself as ahamkara, I should learn to see myself as sakshi, now transacting through ahamkara. For this purpose, Sri Krishna talked about the creation and the essence of this topic is, I am also a mixture of saguna and nirguna aspects.

And having presented this foundation, Sri Krishna begins the teaching from the 5th verse onwards. He talks about the three gunas of ahamkara, to show that all the three gunas are causes of bondage; we need to know how to make use of them properly, like anything in the creation. If I know how to handle things, it can help me grow; if I do not know how to handle, the very same thing will cause problems.

You take fire, it is a blessing or a curse; it depends upon whether I know how to handle fire. Electricity is a blessing or curse? By itself it is neither; but if I do not know how to handle it, it becomes a curse. Similarly, the three gunas also; if I do not know how to make use of them, they can become binding chains. Word Guna has a second meaning, they is 'ropes' or "chains" that bind me.

Shloka's 5-18 (Analysis of Ahamkara)

And

therefore I should have a thorough understanding of the three gunas. So from 5th verse, up to 18th verse, we get an analysis of the three gunas, essentially an analysis of the ahamkara;

because ahamkara has the three gunas. And for the convenience of our study, Sri Krishna classifies this analysis into five parts.

First he gives the lakshanam or definition of the three gunas.

Second he gives the mode of bondage; how each guna binds us. This is called bandana prakaraha.

Third, he gives the lingam, indication to find out which guna is dominant in me.

Fourth is Gathi, which means post-death travel; the travel after life.

Fifth is phalam, the consequences of the predominance of each guna.

Sri

Krishna gives the definitions: satva is prakashatmakam; rajas is raghatmakam, tamas is mohanatmakam.

Satva

is that disposition of the mind, which makes the mind knowledge friendly. So satva makes the mind endowed with that disposition, which is knowledge friendly, which makes the mind a bright mind;

So he is disposed to the acquisition of knowledge; whereas rajo guna makes the mind karma friendly; activity friendly; a disposition, which is suited for dynamism.

Whereas tamo guna makes the mind unfit for, inimical to both others, thus it is neither knowledge friendly nor activity friendly. Such a disposition of mind is called Satva, rajas and tamas are propensity-based definition that indicate disposition of one's mind.

Then the next one is the mode of bondage. How does it bind? When my mind is knowledge friendly, naturally I become a bookworm; all the time interested in operating the Gyanendriyas; not karmendriya-active person; and therefore I look for an infrastructure, which is conducive to more and more study.

A learning person will first look for those things. This becomes a bondage when such a conducive atmosphere is not available; then this person becomes restless and unhappy. This is the bondage caused by satva guna.

Whereas rajo guni does not like

library or knowledge.

He

wants to do a lot of things; and therefore he looks for activity friendly atmosphere; and, when such an atmosphere is there; that mind is very happy and if that is not there he becomes mad.

And

tamo Guna is looking for sleep and if it is not available he gets mad.

These

are the three types of bandana prakaraha.

Then

the lingam, the indication of the three gunas; this is a corollary we get from the previous discussions.

When

satva is dominant then Gyanam increases; reading increases; study increases; thinking increases; it is an indication of satva vritti.

Whereas

when activity increases, it is an indication of rajo vritti and when sleep and sleepy condition increases, it is an indication of tamo vritti.

And then Sri Krishna talked about the gathi after death. When a Satva dominant person dies he goes to higher lokas; when a Rajas dominant person dies he is born in the manushya loka; because manushya loka is meant for Karma. When tamo guna dominant person dies that person goes down; hence, urdhva gathi, madhyama gathi and adho gathi.

And

finally, the consequences of these three gunas were also pointed out; that is the phalam or the consequences in this life. When satva guna increases, Gyana vridhhi occurs; when rajo guna increases, the ambition and activities increase; and when tamo guna increases, nidra and negligence in life increases and his life will be closer to an animal. So thus, all five topics Sri Krishna discusses from the 5th verse up to 18th.

Shlokas 19 and 20

And then comes the crucial two verses #19 and 20, in which Sri Krishna talks about transcending the three gunas. And for transcending the three gunas one will have to make use of the three gunas. Just as a fruit requires skin for ripening and once it is ripened, it does not require the skin and naturally the skin is shed.

Similarly,

the entire spiritual sadhana is a gradual journey from tama pradhana

life to raja pradhana

life to satva pradhana

life to gunathitha life. And

how does the scripture accomplish that? The scripture prescribes lot of karma

to a person who is now tama pradhana. And what type of karmas? It prescribes Sakama karma.

Selfish

activities to fulfill worldly and materialistic desires; In fact scriptures

encourage such desires; because it wants to inject desires in the tamoguna person, who

is always sleepy and refuses to get up and wants to make him rajo guni.

And

once a person has got into sakama karma, then the scriptures, gradually change his status.

At

first his rajo guna is tamo guna or tainted rajo guna, the first phase. Then satva guna tainted rajo guna should be the next phase.

What is the difference between the two? Both rajo gunas will activate a person. It will make the person extremely ambitious; it will whip up the ambition but the difference will be initially all desires are personal and selfish-oriented; that means the beneficiary of my activity will be only I, or my family.

Whereas

when that rajo guna is converted to the higher rajo guna, sakama karma will be converted into nishkama karma, which means the beneficiaries of my activity will be more and more people. Not only my family alone, but also others will also be benefited.

As the beneficiaries increase, sakama karma is getting converted into nishkama karma. This is travel from tamo guna; from lower rajo guna to higher rajo guna. To use the 4th chapter language, one goes from guna shudra to guna vaishya to guna kshatriya. Guna kshatriya is a person whose life and activities will benefit the entire community and even the nation.

Once a person has lived a guna kshatriya life, which is otherwise called karma yoga, then the scriptures ask you to graduate you to the next stage of a satva guna pradhana life; after the peak of activity, gradually one has to withdraw; from Grihastha ashrama to vanaprastha ashrama may occur

And at this stage alone, the scriptures talk about more of upasana and less of karma. So upasana is the sadhana which converts an extroverted active person into a quiet and withdrawn; and self or atma oriented person. Thus, upasana sadhana makes me a satva pradhana purushaha.

When

I become a satva pradhana purusha, the activities are gradually dropped, and one does not feel any guilt because he has contributed to the society sufficiently.

He

is not a selfish person he has contributed for so many years. Now he can turn to concentrated spirituality. And not only that, physically also, this person becomes incapable of more activity, by this time.

Thus tama pradhana to raja pradhana to satva pradhana he has reached; by following karma yoga and upasana.

Then, the satva guna to nirguna travel, is a totally different type of travel. There is no corridor connecting satva guna

and nirguna. Tamo **guna**

can be changed to rajo guna, rajo guna

can be changed to satva guna; but, satva guna can never be converted into nirguna. If satva guna

is converted, it will again become tamo guna

or rajo guna only. There is no corridor connecting guna

thraya and Nirguna or gunathita and therefore the only sadhana available is
Gyanam.

So after a person becomes a satva guna pradhana, karma yoga is dropped, upasana is dropped, because they have done their job by making me satva guna pradhana. In fact satva guna pradhana person is called sadhana chatushtaya sampanna adhikari. Then he has to move to Gyana yoga. That Sri Krishna tells us clearly.

As I said the crucial word in that 19th verse is Vetti; meaning,
he comes to know. And Sri Krishnadoes not say how to get the knowledge, because he has already said
that in the 4th chapter. Knowledge does not automatically happen. No knowledge, for that matter, can happen naturally. If you sit quietly in meditation, knowledge does not happen. Then, what should you do?

Gyanina
yoga means going
to a guru. sthrothriya brahmanishta
guru means systematic study of the Vedanta. Not a casual now and then listening to some satsanga here and there, and all of them are meant to inspire you, inspiration is different;
teaching is different. Dayananda Swamiji says: **Preaching is different; teaching is different.**

And
systematic study of scriptures includes shravanam,
mananam and nidhidyanam,
for a length of time, and there afterwards removing all the doubts by proper
mananam or analysis and thereafter internalization of the teaching. So through shravna, manana

and nidhidhyasana, I become
gunathitha.

Now the question is: How do I become gunathitha by shravanam? As I said, the body, mind complex will be eternally saguna, it would not become nirguna. Then what do I do through Gyana yoga? **I learn to dis-identify from the body by knowing the fact that body is only an incidental instrument I am using for worldly transactions exactly like the spectacle and when I remove the spectacles, I am not gone, but I am not able to see the people, similarly when the body mind complex is not there, I do not disappear, but I also do not have the medium to interact with the people;** and we do experience such a situation daily; When; during the deepsleep state. And in sleep the body mind complex is temporarily used and then it will be dropped, I should take the instrument as myself.

Then,
if I am not the body mind complex, who am I? For that Sri Krishna gave the
answer:

in Shloka 14:

20.

I am not the body, but I am the experiencer of the body; I am not the mind; I am the experiencer of the mind; and therefore, all the known attributes belong to the known body mind complex only. This is a very important law. You should remember. Any experienced attribute, belong to the experienced object. If I see green color, the color belongs to the eye or the object? The seen color belongs to the seen object; it does not belong to the seer eye. Whatever color I am seeing, they all belong to the objectified-attribute that belong to the objectified-substances; no attribute belongs to the objectifier-I. **And therefore all the gunas belong to the body mind complex. "I" am free from all the three gunas.** So you do not contact the gunathitha atma, you do not become the gunathitha atma, you

own up the fact that I was gunathitha; I am gunathitha, and I will be gunatitha. For how many days, will I be Gunathitha? I am incapable of becoming saguna. So this transformation in the I takes place and this knowledge based transformation is called mokshaha or jivan mukti.

So after death, will I have urdhva gathi or madhyama gathi or atho gathi? If I have satva guna I will have urdhva gathi; if I have rajo guna I will have madhya gathi; if I have tamo guna I will have atho gathi. However, if I am Nirguna, I will have no gathi. Aham agathihi asmi. I am agathihi, because I cannot move from one place to another, because **I am the atma, the chaitanyam, which is all pervading, in Me the consciousness, the saguna matter appears and in Me the consciousness the saguna matter resolves. And I am never affected by the three gunas. This is called moksha.**

And

naturally Arjuna is curious to know what will be the lifestyle of such a gunathitha person, and therefore he asked three questions in the 21st verse,

Shloka 14:21:

The three questions are: What are the indications of the gunathitha? Characteristics of gunathitha and then what is the conduct of the gunathitha: acharaha, and the method of becoming gunathithah.

And

Sri Krishna gives the answer, the indication is that the very knowledge makes the mind less and less reactive to the situation because the mind has become an enlightened mind and an enlightened mind learns to have the right attitude towards the saguna creation. And what is the right attitude? Understanding that the the

proportion of the gunas varies from individual to individual therefore no human being can be like me. And therefore there is no question of compatibility. So looking for compatibility is the worst thing that you can do and even if by chance there is any compatibility between two persons, it cannot be for long, because both have dynamic and changing mind; and therefore differences are natural in anatma. Association and dissociation are natural in anatma. Birth, growth, declension and death are natural in anatma. And therefore I cannot change the anatma, I should only change my attitude. And this changing of the attitude takes place gradually only because the old behavior continues.

And through Nidhidhyasanam, which is called dwelling upon the teaching; I reduce my reactions gradually. Now, when the reactions reduce, knowledge does not improve; Knowledge does not become brighter, but knowledge seems to improve, because the reactions are decreasing. Just like on a purnami day, the moon seems to be brighter and brighter in the evening, but you know that moon is not becoming brighter but as the sunlight recedes, sunlight is an obstacle to the brightness of the moon; As the sun light recedes, the moon seems to be brighter and brighter; similarly my reactions come down as a result of the assimilation; as a result nidhidhyasanam.

And as I had said before, we can see the decrease in reaction at three levels: frequency of unhealthy reactions, like frustration, like fear, like insecurity, anger, etc. the frequency of these comes down. Do not expect a flashy

transformation.

It is not going to happen immediately. It is a gradual assimilation.

Not

only frequency comes down, the intensity of the reactions also come down. The

decrease in the intensity occurs at three levels; manasam, vachikam, and kayikam. That is

why when there is extreme reaction, there is butterfly in the stomach. Before

writing an examination, the stomach may get upset and with it mind, speech and

body as well. Therefore Arjuna, mental intensity comes down and later even

verbal and physical reactions come down.

So

this is reduction in intensity and finally there is a reduction in the recovery

period also; previously once I got angry it continued for days; but now it

comes down in hours; and then it comes down to minutes; then it comes down to

seconds; so I get a mental resilience to bounce back, even though I reacted

violently, I am able to forget that and continue with my life.

So thus nidhidhyasanam, converts

Gyanam into Gyana nishta,

reducing the violent reaction. But we should remember, reactions can never

become zero. Zero reactions are only in the case of a table, the chair, etc. they

do not have it; they do not get angry. So our mind is a live mind; therefore we

can reduce the frequency, intensity, recovery period, but it can never become

zero. Once I reach this state my meditation or nidhidhyasanam becomes slightly different; and that nidhidhyasanam is that I should not be too much obsessed with the mind and its reactions; because to be over obsessed with the mind, is again identification with the mind. That is ahamkara; and therefore, I reduce the reaction and thereafterwards, I learn to distance from my mind, and I do not worry too much about the reacting mind. That is reaction to the reaction.

So every Gita student has to face two reactions; one is the natural reaction to the situation; and the second is reaction to the fact that I reacted, leading to depression.

So, after a some time, I drop my secondary reactions as well; I am not over-obsessed with the reaction of the mind. And I say that I do not have any reaction because I am now the witness of the reacting mind. So one should first reduce the reactions and then give up the reactions to the reactions.

Shlokas 22-27:

This is called Gyana nishta that Sri Krishna tells us about in verses 22 to 27. In the 22nd verses, he is talking about the absence of reaction to the reaction. In one of the guru purnima talks, I have dealt with this topic very, elaborately. Reaction to the reaction is a greater samsara and a Gyani does not react to the reaction. And thereafter as a Gyana nishta I

am not obsessed with my mind and its tendencies.

And

then the second question was how does he conduct himself in life. Sri Krishna emphasizes that the Gyani has equanimity of the mind; his mind is free from violent reactions and even if there are small reactions, he does not react to those reactions. So samatvam is his acharaha.

Final

question of Arjuna was how to become gunathitha? The answer is Knowledge is gained with the bhakthi to the Lord; surrender to the Lord and by the grace of the Lord. May you get Gyanam and that Gyanam is the only solution.

Through Bhakthi you do not get liberation. Through bhakthi you get a conducive atmosphere for knowledge and a conducive personality as well; and then through knowledge you will attain mokshaha. So with this the answers to Arjuna's question are complete and the 14th chapter is over.

Take Away:

Ahamkara has the three gunas.

Therefore

saguna ahamkara plus nirguna sakshi; Saguna matter plus nirguna consciousness, is the individual.

Dayananda

Swamiji says: Preaching is different; teaching is different.

I

learn to dis-identify from the body by knowing the fact that

body is only an incidental instrument I am using for worldly transactions exactly like the spectacle and when I remove the spectacles, I am not gone, but I am not able to see the people, similarly when the body mind complex is not there, I do not disappear, but I also do not have the medium to interact with the people;

I am the atma, the chaitanyam, which is all pervading, in Me the consciousness, the saguna matter appears and in Me the consciousness the saguna matter resolves. And I am never affected by the three gunas. This is called moksha.

**With Best
Wishes,**

Ram Ramaswamy

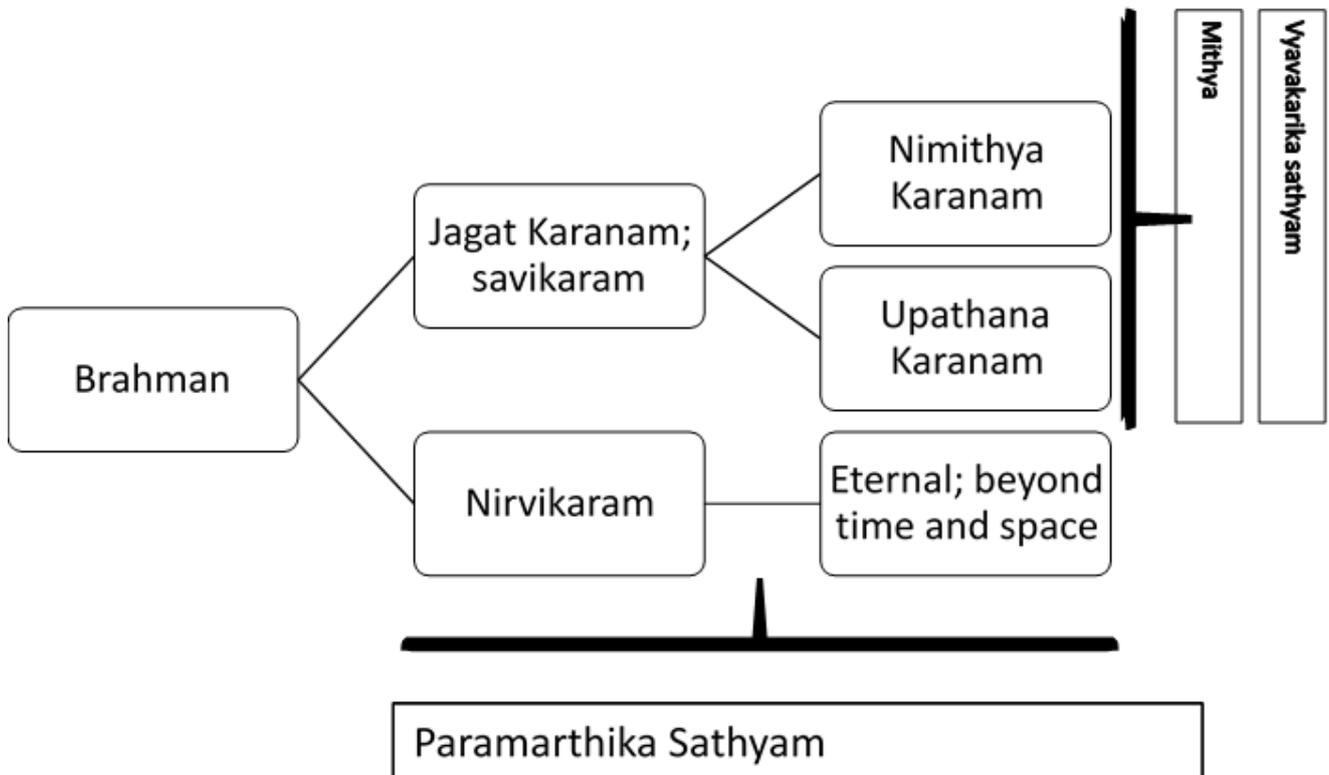
Sādhana Catuṣṭayaṃ

Swami Paramarthananda discusses Sādhana Catuṣṭaya Saṃpatti (Fourfold Qualifications) , in many classes¹. I have compiled this document based on Swamiji's teachings of these classes. In the Karikas to Mandukya Upanishad, Gowdabadhachariyar advises us to give maximum effort to Sādhana Catuṣṭayaṃ. This document describes Sādhana Catuṣṭayaṃ and the ways to improve Sādhana Catuṣṭayaṃ.

Mandukya Upanishad, Class 41

While studying the nature of Brahman, we face a peculiar problem and that problem is some of the features of Brahman are contradictory to one another. Main contradiction is in the description of Brahman as nirvikaram and jagat karanam. The word nirivkaram means not subject to change; The same Upanishad also calls Brahman as upadhana karanam or material cause. Any material cause produces an effect only by undergoing modification. Examples: Seed to tree, milk to curt, gold to chain. If Brahman is nirvikaram he can't be Jagat Karanam. As both attributes are given by the same Veda and we can't ignore this contradiction. We have to accept and assimilate the contradiction. If two opposite attributes remain in one and the same substance, then one must be real attribute and the other unreal; one is higher order and the other is lower order. In dream we travel in train, while laying still in bed. This is possible because travel belong pradhibasika sathyam and motionless belong to vyavakarika sathyam. Nirvikaram is paramarthika sathyam and savikaram is vyavakarika sathyam. Once you know that savikaram is mithya, then karanam status is mithya or Brahman is not real cause of the universe. If the Brahman is unreal cause, the universe born out of unreal Brahman, then the universe is unreal.

Savikaram and Nirvikaram: Apparent Vedic Contradiction



This conclusion is supported by Upanishad by many sruthi vakyam:

1. Na eha Nana: It occurs in 2.1.11 Katha Upanishad. "Neha nanasthi kinchana" is the full statement meaning there is no plurality at all; there is no subject/object/instrument plurality. The Upanishad is making the statement in present tense, indicating there is no plurality even now when you are able to see plurality. The perceived plurality is not absolute reality. Just like dream perceived plurality is not reality. Solidified ignorance is matter. From the body stand point, this world is

real but

thuriyum standpoint this world is mithya.

2. Indhro Mayabihi: Occurs in Brahadharanya Upanishad 2.5.19; Here the word Indra stands for Brahman. The non-dual Brahman assumes the pluralistic form of the universe through Maya (only apparently).

3. Ajaya Manaha Bahudha: From Purusha Suktham 21st Mantra. Brahman becomes pluralist world without producing. Brahman creating plurality without creating plurality; it is as though produced but really not produced.

Conclusion: The universe is seeming production there is no real

universe. We produce dream object with nidhra sakthi which includes

avaruna sakthi (veiling power) and viksheba sakthi (projecting power).

Avaruna sakthi which covers the fact that you are lying down on the bed;

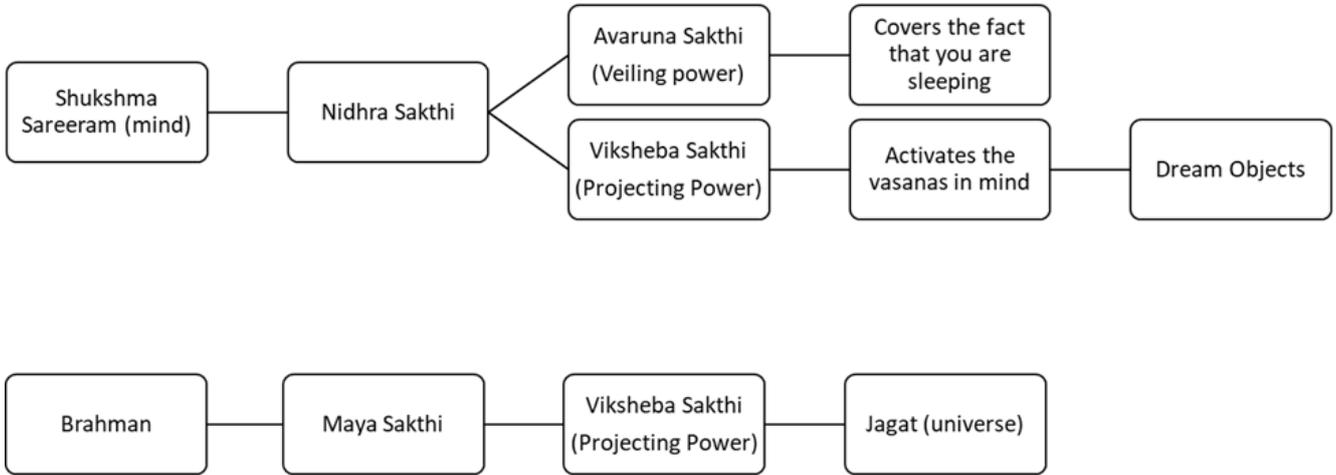
this is the avaruna sakthi of nidhra. The viksheba sakthi (projecting

power) activates all vasanas in your mind and apparent world is

projected. If we can do this, Brahman can create the universe.

In the case of Brahman only viksheba sakthi alone functions.

Purusha Suktam V21: Dream Objects and Universe



Verse 25

4. In the mantra 2 of Eesawasya

Upanishad, the teacher criticizes and negates hiranya karbha upasana.

This is the criticism of Hiranya Karbha itself. By criticizing and negating

hiranya garbha is negation of the whole creation. Hiranya Karbha is first

born or first kariyam, if that is criticized, then it is as good as criticizing

the whole universe. It is criticized because it is not sathyam it is

mithya and the Upanishad says don't go after hiranya garbha the mithya vasthu,

but go after the Sathyam brahman. The first born hiranya garba is criticized,

by that way the whole world is criticized. The very fact the Upanishad

negates the world, it is mithya.

5. Brahadharanay Upanishad

3.9.27.7: Jadhanayeva jayathe...: Jivatma is never born, even though we all have the misconception. If jivatma is to be born, who can create the jivatma? There is no creator of jivatma and therefore there is no jivatma creation; the creation we see is misconception or a second layer of dream.

Verse 26

Brahadharanya 3rd chapter 9 th section 26th mantra: Here the Upanishad introduces the whole world as moortha (tangible) amoortha (non-tangible like energy, mind, thought, emotion etc.) universe. Sthula sarerream is moortha prabanja; sukshma sareeram amoortha prabanaja; The Upanishad says the entire moortha and amoortha prabanja is not the truth. First nethi is negate moortha prabanja and second nethi is to negate amoortha prabanja. Whatever you objectify is not atma; whatever you experience is not atma. If not all this is not atma tell me how to experience atma? Atma is not a thing to experience. It is nothing but I, the experiencer, the consciousness which is experienced by me all the time. Since it is not an object of experience, the Upanishad negates every object of experience. When you negate all objects, what remains is consciousness principle which illumines the nothingness. The

witness of the blankness, the nothingness is the I the unobjectifiable consciousness. Consciousness is not something you can look and contact. It is ever evident similar to how a teacher knows a student is in the class the for the entire class.

Verse 27

From verse 24 to 26 Gowdapadha established that the world is unreal by scriptural analysis in six mantras (3 mantras in verse 24; 2 mantras in verse 25; one mantra in verse 26) and proved that world is mithya. From verse 27 to 30, Gowdapadha says even the logical analysis will lead to same conclusion. You can never logically prove a creation; if you say there is a creation born, then you will have to say what is the cause. You can't talk about an effect without cause.

Bagawad Geeta, Class 159: Chapter 12, Verses 12 & 13

Shloka # 11:

○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○ ○○○○○○ ○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○ ○○○ ○○○○ ○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○○12.11○○

If you are unable to do even this, in that

case, having resorted to the Yoga for Me, thereafter renounce the results of all works by becoming controlled in mind.

Continuing his teachings

Swamiji said, in chapter 12, from shloka # 3 to # 11, Sri Krishna talked about the five stages of Bhakti Yoga. Bhakti yoga is not a separate Sadhana rather it is a common name for the five stages of Karma Yoga, Sadhana Yoga and Gyana Yoga. All five stages, starting with the fifth stage, down to first one, were discussed.

The first stage, described in shloka # 11, is Sakama Karma, the lowest stage of Bhakti Yoga. Here one can be a materialistic person but nevertheless he has to observe two points:

1. Do not adopt immoral methods for material gains. Follow dharmic methods.
2. When you accomplish your material desire and when you are about to enjoy it; before enjoying it, take a moment to say a prayer to God with a proper attitude; this is known as Ishwara Prasada Bhavana.

This itself will start the purification of mind. This Ishwara sambandha will purify the mind. When performed over a long period of time, the mind will mature and your desires will also undergo a change; it will become subtle; it will become a desire to serve

**renunciation,
Peace follows immediately.**

Here Sri Krishna talks of four types of sadhanas. He breaks them down from lowest to highest.

1. Abhyasa
2. Gyanam
3. Dhyanam
4. Karma Phala Tyagam

Abhyasa: means meditation on God. What type of meditation is it? It is a meditation that is not backed by knowledge, or knowledge of God. It is meditation performed out of blind belief. One meditates upon any chosen deity such as Rama, Krishna or any other form. It is known as Knowledge-less meditation.

Gyanam: By thorough study of scriptures one knows what God is. Here the knowledge is obtained without practice of meditation upon god, to internalize the knowledge. So, meditation-less knowledge is Gyanam.

Dhyanam: It is a combination of both above; one who has understood scriptures and then dwells upon god. It is meditation with knowledge.

Karmaphala Tyagaha: Sri Krishna talked about this topic in Shloka # 11 as well. Here one dedicates all Karma phala's to god and takes back Ishwara prasadam. This Sadhana was there in the

previous list of five sadhanas as the lowest one. But here Sri Krishna places it as highest one, in this list of four. He openly contradicts the previous shloka.

Shankaracharya says, it is an open contradiction; but Sri Krishna's intention is that while Karma phala thyaga is lowest step; unfortunately, most people are ready only for this lowest level alone. We are still materialistic people. We are ready for this stage only. Sri Krishna does not want to give such people an inferiority complex. Hence he is saying something like the phrase "small is beautiful"; so he glorifies this sadhana. This whole shloka is called Arthavada Shloka, which means

exaggerating the value of a sadhana to encourage the people to practice that value.

Of the four sadhanas:

1. Lowest is abhyasa; a mechanical meditation.
2. Gyanam: is better than Abyasa Yoga. Meditation-less knowledge is better than Knowledge-less Meditation.
3. Dhyanam: Meditation practiced after gaining knowledge, is superior to Gyanam.
4. Karma Phala Thyaga: is better than all three above, although it is lowest in list of

previous five sadhanas. This ranking is meant to encourage people to practice Sakama Karmas.

What will Karma Phala

Thyaga lead to? Dedicating fruits of effort to God is an acknowledgement;

Nivedanam, informing God, that everything is due to his grace; this awareness

is karmaphala thyaga. Whatever phalas I get, I accept it as Ishwara Prasada.

The word Prasada in

Sanskrit means tranquility of mind. If every experience is a prasada in my

mind, I will have no resistance to the experience. I give up resistance, hence

called Thyagaha. This leads to shanti. With this Bhakti Yoga Sadhanas are over.

First part of chapter one is over as well.

Second part of Chapter one

is from Shloka # 13 to the end.

Shloka # 13:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १३ ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १३ ॥

He who is not hateful towards any creature, who is friendly and compassionate, who has no idea of 'mine' and the idea of egoism, who is the same under sorrow and happiness, who is forgiving;

Say a person goes through

all five stages of Bhakti yoga successfully; how long will it take? Swamiji

says, it depends on the person; it may take one life or

several lives; he then becomes a Gyani or a Parabakta or the highest bhakta. He has Gyanam because he reached the fifth stage. He knows Eka Rupa, Vishwa Rupa and finally Arupa Ishwara. Once he knows Arupa Ishwara, he knows that he is not a subject, rather he realizes that, " I am He, Soham".

He realizes that God is non-different from me; that, he is an Advaita Gyani. He realizes Paramatma and Jivatma are not different; they are just one word used for the same entity; like wave and ocean are names of water; there is no substance known as wave or ocean; it is all water. So, he is highest Bhakta, an Advaita Gyani. He is called Sthita Pragyaha; one who has conviction regarding Advaita Gyanam.

How does such an Advaita Gyani face different situations in life? How does he respond? This is known as Parabhakta Lakshanani. Sri Krishna talks on this subject. Why does he talk about it?

It is a marketing tool used by Sri Krishna.

The first benefit is, once I know the benefit of this knowledge; I will be tempted to follow the Sadhana.

Then the second benefit is; whatever are the natural traits of the Gyani; they should become a sadhana for me, to be

deliberately practiced. Whatever is a natural trait of a realized person; I should take them as a sadhana to be deliberately practiced.

So whatever be his natural trait, they should be taken as a list of sadhanas, which I should deliberately and gradually practice. Therefore, we can take this as a list of virtues to be cultivated. And from this we come to know another important thing also; and that is, when a person practices spiritual sadhana and attains liberation; he is going to survive in this world.

So moksha is not a benefit, which is promised after death. So Krishna makes it very clear; moksha is a state of mind, that you will enjoy while you are living in this world. And therefore our moksha is called jivan mukthi; therefore the description that we get is jivan mukthihi; jivan muktha lakshanani; sthira prajnana lakshanani; para bhaktha lakshanani, is the topic now.

And this is from this thirteen shloka to the 19th shloka and 20th shloka is the conclusion.

Traits of a Gyani:

How do I know if I am a Gyani? You can check for these traits in a Gyani.

First Virtue: Non-hatred (Adveshta)

He does not hate any being in universe; he has freedom from hatred. See, how many people you hate, and you will know your status. So we should ask do I hate anyone; Not anyone? We have got a very big list; starting from neighbor onwards; there is a very big list; bigger the list; farther from moksha I am;

There is an interesting phenomenon, whenever the shastra says: you should not hate anyone; our first immediate reaction is we try to justify our hatred; so we give a big description of the person; and what all negative traits he has got; what all akramas he is doing; Swamiji that is why I am hating; they expect Swamiji to OK that person deserves hatred. So according to shastras there is no such thing called justified or justifiable hatred, any form of hatred is unjustifiable. And why do we say so; because according to shastra; every person is intrinsically a good divine and pure person. There is no impure person in the world; there is no evil character in the world; every single jeevatma is essentially none other than suddha paramatma; therefore nobody deserves hatred. No person deserves hatred; because every person is a Saint; the worst sinner is also a saint.

A person's actions maybe corrupt, although he is pure. Can we hate actions of a person? Shankaracharya says, even wrong action or behavior of a person does not deserve hatred. **Hatred is not a remedy for misbehavior.**

No action or character can be enhanced by hatred. **Neither a person nor his behavior deserves hatred. Hatred is an utterly useless tendency.**

Further, hatred damages the

mind of the hater. It corrodes the mind.

Shastra's say every person deserves love; misbehavior deserves an appropriate response.

What is the response?

Hatred is not the right response. Shastra's suggest using Sama (education), Dana, Bheda and Danda. Even application of Danda should be performed with love alone and not hatred.

Is it possible to give Danda with love? Shastra's say even punishment can be given with love. Citing an example: a mother beating her child, even here, the mother can't hate her child. So misbehavior requires appropriate action with love. Therefore, even Sri Krishna may choose to destroy kamsa; and He may ask Arjuna to destroy Duryodhana. Therefore whatever appropriate action is to be taken we should take; but the advice is, it should not be motivated by hatred; but it must be motivated by love and to change or correct the person. Freedom from hatred is the first trait of a Gyani.

Take away:

Bhakti Yoga is not a particular Sadhana; rather it is a range of sadhanas that everyone has to go through.

On hatred:

First virtue of a saint is
Non-hatred (Adveshta)

Hatred is not a remedy for
misbehavior.

Neither a person nor his
behavior deserves hatred. Hatred is an utterly useless
tendency.

Shastras say every person
deserves love; misbehavior deserves an appropriate response.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Om Chant

<http://www.advaidam.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/om.mp3>

Dharma

Dharma is a unique Vedic statement with immense hidden meaning. The word Dharm is derived from the root Dhru – which means that supports, protects, sustains, holds, – “Dhrayathe yat dharmaha”.

Dharma is that principal which protects sustains the cosmic law and order. There is no single equivalent English word, which justifies the full and complete meaning of Dharma. So a combination or a set of words are used to explain it. Righteousness, Morality, Religion, Sathyam, Charity, Character, Law abiding, Duty bound, Luck, Punyam, Swabhavam (abiding in real nature) etc.

Dharma has to be understood according to the context in which it is used

1. Dharma is the first of four Purusharthas (human goals):

Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. The Artha (security) and Kama (Entertainment) are the goals for experiencing in this life. Dharma in this context is called Punyam and it is a goal for the next life. According to Law of Karma, every action invariably produces a result (Phalam) – either favorable or unfavorable. The Karma Phalam thus generated can be experienced partly or wholly in this life or carried forward to the next life. The Phalam that is experienced in this life is called Drista Phalam (visible result). If it is favorable result, then it is sukam and if it is unfavorable, then it is Dhukkam. The Phalam that is generated but not experienced in this life is transferred to the next life. This is called Adhrista Phalam (Invisible result). The results of noble activities of this life are accumulated to be experienced in the next life are registered as Punyam. Similarly the results of evil activities of this life are carried to the next life as Papam. This concept is very important for Hindus who believe in Punarjanma.

“Arthae Gruhe nivartante Smasane mitra bhadhavaah

Sukrutham Dhuskrutham chiva Gacantham anu gacchathi”

“At the time of death, all wealth is left at home.

Only thing that the departed carries with him is the Punyam and Papam one accumulates in this life”

So the accumulation of punyam in this life is the goal of dharma purushartha.

2. Dharma maintains and protects universal harmony. Whenever Dharma declines and Adharma escalates, the cosmic harmony suffers. Unless the Universal harmony is re-established,

serious consequences ensue.

The process of establishing dharma is two fold:

1. Parithranaya Sadhunam (Sista Rakshana) – By promoting dharmic population by spreading values through teaching.
2. Vinasaya Dhuskrutham (Dusta Sikshana) – Converting the adharmic people to dharmic people through teaching if that fails to eliminate them.

By the above two methods dharma is re-established. Lord Krishna accomplished these goals by giving out Gita and also by eliminating the wicked.

Ramana Maharshi – The Sage of Arunachala

This is a Youtube video regarding Ramana Maharishi. Students of vedanta and Ramana Maharishi will find this very useful: