

Bagawat Geeta, Class 70: Chapter 5, Verses 3 to 7

Shloka # 3:

अतिरिक्तं तदेव विवेकं तदेव विवेकं तदेव विवेकं
विवेकं विवेकं तदेव विवेकं तदेव विवेकं 5.3

Know him to be a perpetual renouncer who neither shuns nor seeks, O mighty-armed! One who is above such contraries is really liberated from bondage.

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said that the teaching of previous three chapters was that there is no choice between Karma Yoga and Gyana Yoga. The Spiritual Sadhanas are:

- Gyana Yoga for liberation and
- Karma Yoga for preparation of mind.

All forms of sadhanas including Patanjali's yoga of meditation come under these sadhanas. Even Bhakti Yoga, depending on the type of practice, comes under one of these two sadhanas. When Bhakthi yoga is understood as pooja, or any type of saguna dhyanam it will come under karma yoga. When bhakti yoga is performed as a Shastric study, it becomes Gyana Yoga, a higher level of Bhakti Yoga. Thus, Bhakthi yoga is common to both karma yoga and gyana yoga. Lower level of bhakthi yoga is called karma yoga. Higher level of bhakthi yoga is called Gyana yoga; there is no exclusive bhakthi yoga, separate from Karma yoga and Gyana yoga. Therefore, all the sadhanas will fall within these two alone.

Regarding life style, Sri Krishna says, there is a choice. We can be in society and follow both sadhanas or be out of society and follow both sadhanas. There is even a third choice in lifestyle. One can follow karma Yoga as a Grihasta then

become a Sanyasi and follow Gyana Yoga. This third option is the one preferred by the Vedas.

The question is asked, how can one follow spirituality in Grihasthashrama where there are so many distractions? Sri Krishna says, in itself there is nothing wrong with Grihasthashrama. **The primary problem for a Grihasta is Raga and Dvesha.** We have expectations about everything, our children, wife, house, friend etc. One has an ideal in mind and when others do not meet that ideal, one is disturbed. We need to manage our Raga Dvesha. Such a person is a Nithya Sanyasi.

The advantage of Sanyasahrama is that the Sanyasi has no attachments. Therefore, he usually has a light mind. Even a Grihasta can enjoy a light mind if he does not have Raga and Dvesha.

Citing king Janaka as a model of Grihasthashrama, once the king was with his Guru amidst other Sanyasis. The Sanyasis looked down upon the King, as he was a Grihasta. The Guru wanted to teach the Sanyasis a lesson. He created an illusory fire in the ashram and immediately all Sanyasi's ran to protect their possessions. When they came back they found the king still sitting alone listening to the Guru's teaching. Swamiji says, wearing a saffron robe does not guarantee Sanyasa. Therefore, even a Grihasta can be a Sanyasi internally.

Swamiji clarified that Sri Krishna is not saying that one should not have Raga Dvesha. Human beings will have likes and dislikes. Even Gods have their likes and dislikes. See how Sri Krishna loves his flute and Saraswathi Devi loves her Veena and Sri Ganesha loves his carrier, the Mouse. Preferences in life will be there. Our personality is actually defined by our preferences or likes and dislikes. Sri Krishna, however says, do not become a slave to Raga and Dvesha. If you can fulfill them fine, if not convert it into a non-binding desire. What

is a non-binding desire? Citing through an example, it is not unusual for a parent to dream of a child becoming an IAS officer. They try everything to help the child in this process. However, in the end, the child could become a Sanyasi. Sri Krishna says, have dreams; but be ready to face whatever happens; this is called management of ragah-dvesha. If you have this capability you are a Sanyasi.

O Arjuna, one who has managed the Dvandas (pairs of opposites or Raga Dvesha), he will definitely attain Moksha even in Grihasthashrama. Even such a person will have to follow Karma yoga and then come to Gyana Yoga.

Shloka # 4:

The thoughtless, not men of discrimination, affirm that Samkhya and Yoga are different. Properly resorting to either of them, one wins the fruit of both.

Sri Krishna concludes by saying that both ashramas are equally efficacious. He calls Grihasthashrama as Pravritti marga and Sanyasashrama as Nivritti marga. Sri Krishna has combined the four ashramas into two. Thus, Grihasthashrama includes Bramhacharya and Sanyasashrama includes Vanaprastha. Both ashramas are good and neither is superior. Only an ignorant person will say that one of them is superior or that they are not equal. A wise person will certainly not say such a thing.

There is in Grihasthashrama a guru shishya paramapara as there is one in Sanyashrama as well. And in fact, among all the Upanishads, the most important portion is called **tatvamasi prakaranam**, where the teaching of tatvamasi comes. This teaching usually took place between a father and son. Thus, the scriptures talk about the Grihasthashrama Gyani parampara, as well as Sanyasashrama Gyani parampara. That these two paramparas existed indicate that you can get Gyanam in any of

the ashramas.

In both ashramas Gyanam is possible. Sri Krishna advises that one should take the ashrama most suitable to one's inclinations and Prarabhda Karmas.

Many factors influence the type of ashrama one chooses. But once a choice is made one should follow the requirements of that ashrama implicitly. It is very important that finally the inner transformation occurs. Gyanam is also the goal of a Grihastha Sanyasi.

Shloka # 5:

The status won by the Samkhyas is attained by the Yogins also. Only he perceives who perceives that Samkhya and Yoga are one.

Here again Sri Krishna reinforces the same ideas.

Samkhya Sanyasi's do attain moksha following Karma Yoga and then Gyana yoga. Purificatory sadhanas are many including the Sanyasi's Danda. A sanyasi does not have sacred thread he uses a danda instead. A danda puja is also performed daily. Both Sanyasi and Grihasta attain moksha through purification.

While both ashramas are equally efficient each has its plus and minus points exactly like having your own house versus a rented house. The one who sees this fact, that person alone, sees that other people have wrong perceptions.

Sri Krishna says all this so that Arjuna does not run away from the battlefield. Arjuna, on the other hand, somehow or the other wants to run away. There is a tension between the two. If Sri Krishna says sanyasa ashrama is superior then Arjuna will run away; therefore he says that the one who sees both as equal, he alone has got the right vision.

Shloka # 6:

महायज्ञानात् विद्युत्तमं विद्युत्तमं विद्युत्तमं
महायज्ञानात् विद्युत्तमं विद्युत्तमं 5.6 ॥

Indeed, renunciation, mighty armed! Is hard to win without Karma Yoga. With Yoga, the silent sage attains Brahman without much delay.

Sri Krishna now adds some new information. He has already said that both ashramas are equal and efficient. This is like asking which subject is better, physics or chemistry? All sciences are equally important. Now, if I have to choose one of them it is because of my mental make up and inclination. One of them may be more conducive. Some places are humid and others very dry. Some may prefer one or the other. In this context, a prepared mind is better for Sanyasa. An unprepared mind may feel very lonely in Sanyasa. There will be nobody to ask him how he feels.

Citing an example, an Indian couple was residing in a small town USA. The lady was a housewife and was often left alone. Due to loneliness she gradually became clinically depressed. Her house was not a silent ashrama rather it was the silence of an Shmashana (cremation ground). After some time they came back to India. Here, now, she feels much better although it is very noisy.

So, to enjoy Sanyasahrama one needs a level of mind that is different. So, only a contemplative person and one who likes Maunam, a Muni, will find it compatible. Such a person, by practicing Yoga, will attain moksha before long. So, Sri Krishna says, for majority of people, Grihasthashrama is the best choice. Sanyasahrama should be taken up only with advice of a Guru and consent of the shishya.

It is when this is not followed that one reads of the many problems with Sanyasi's today.

Shloka # 7:

स्वाधीनः स्वामीः स्वात्मः स्वात्माः ५.७

Established in Yoga, his mind purified, his self and senses controlled, his Self becomes the Self of all living beings, he is not tainted though he works.

Upto shloka # 7, it was a comparative study of the two ashramas. While both are considered good, a life of activity is considered better. Now, Sri Krishna talks of Sadhanas that both Grihastha and Sanaysi have to practice. What are those sadhanas? This shloka is all about sadhanas and the actions one has to take in his ashrama. Sri Krishna talks of Grihasthashrama first, as he prefers it.

Stages:

1. Karma Yoga Yukta: Become a karma Yogi as described in chapter # 3. Such a person is one who balances materialistic pursuit with spiritual pursuit. He does not spend all his time going after material aspects of life.

Every individual is a mixture of matter (anatma) and spirit (atma). One should find time to pursue Pancha Maha Yagna for inner growth. There is nothing wrong in acquiring money. However, one should also pursue Dharma and Moksha and not only Artha and Kama. One may have to climb the corporate ladder initially, but at some point he must change to spirituality. In his last stages attention should be given totally to spirituality. Pray to God that just as a mango ripens and once ripe, falls, while initially I am stuck with worldly things, later I should be able to detach and become spiritual. This is called Yoga Yuktatvam. What I am is more important than what I have. If one can understand this itself one has become a Karma Yogi.

Vishudhatma in the shloka is one who depends less on external factors. Dependence is Samsara. Independence is moksha. Thus, less dependence psychologically is Vairagyam. Thus, detachment is purity. Raga Rahit Atma is same as Vishudhatma, which is same as Vairagyam.

Take Away:

We have expectations about everything, our children, wife, house, friend etc. One has an ideal in mind and when others do not meet that ideal, one is disturbed. This is Raga Dvasha. We have to overcome this.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 2

Greetings All,

Introduction:

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad, Swami Paramarthananda said, we saw in the last class that Self-knowledge can be gained through shastra pramanam. It is a mirror that I need, to reflect my Self. It can, however, communicate its message correctly only with the help of a Guru. That Shastra Darpanam gives me knowledge of myself. It is also called Gyana Yoga. This Gyana Yoga has three specific exercises. They are Sravanam, Mananam and Nidhidhyasanam.

Thus,

Sravanam: means consistently listening to teachers six fold clues that are used to extract the core teaching of Vedanta. The six fold clues or six *pramanas* are the correct means of accurate knowledge and to the truth. They are:

- 1) *Pratyakṣa* (perception),
- 2) *Anumāṇa* (inference),
- 3) *Upamāṇa* (comparison and analogy),
- 4) *Arthāpatti* (postulation, derivation from circumstances),
- 5) *Anupalabdi* (non-perception, negative/cognitive proof) and
- 6) *Śabda* (word, testimony of past or present reliable experts).

Without these clues one cannot get to the core of the teaching. Now, there are several interpretations of Upanishads. They include:

3. I am different and God is different.
4. God and I are only partially different and that I am part of God;
5. I am neither part nor different from God. Rather, I am that.

These several interpretations indicate the need for analysis of scriptures or a reverential enquiry into scriptures also known as Mimamsa. This process of enquiry is known as Sravanam. **Here, I learn that I am Brahman and that there is no second thing other than Me. I am the whole. I am All.** This process is called Sravanam.

Mananam:

It is meant to remove doubts about teaching. **These are the**

obstacles between knowledge and conviction. Doubtful knowledge is as good as ignorance. Citing an example, you see a power chord and don't know if it is live. Someone says it is not live. As you are about to touch it, he says, he is only 99% sure it is not live. In this case, you probably will not touch the power chord. Here, even one percent ignorance is ignorance.

The main Vedantic teachings are extraordinary and unswallowable. "I am infinite" is difficult to swallow. I am very sure that I am a mortal human being who is growing old and will die one day. My lifestyle is based on the fact that "I am aging and I will die". The statement I am infinite is not acceptable to me.

With respect to the world, Vedanta says, this world that we are experiencing solidly is not there at all, rather it is a mistaken version of the formless Brahman. Formless Brahman alone exists. Form-full world does not exist. Vedanta tells me, I am something I don't experience. So, with respect to Jiva, Jagat and Brahman, all three of them, I find Vedanta's position difficult to swallow. Therefore, I am full of doubts. The reason for the doubt is that my sense organs reveal a world contrary to the Vedanta. My eyes, ears, nose etc., reveal a world of plurality or Dvaitam, while Vedanta asserts that there is only Advaitam. When there is a clash between direct experience and scriptures, we tend to believe the direct experience. Scriptures are, after all, words written a long time ago by some unknown person(s). So, How can I trust this knowledge while I am experiencing something different everyday. This conflict is called **Prameya Virodha**, or object revealed only by scripture (Advaitam) rather than by direct experience (Dvaitam).

Dvaitam and Advaitam are directly opposite to each other. This intellectual problem can be resolved only through thinking. This process of removing doubts is called Mananam. It alone can give me conviction. Only thinking can validate Vedantic

teaching. Many think scriptural teaching has to be proved. It is not possible to do so. No experience can remove an intellectual problem. All intellectual problems arise from non-thinking or wrong thinking. Only right thinking can solve it. We think meditation and Samadhi will remove these doubts. This is wrong. It is said that Patanjali never got his intellectual conviction through his Yoga Samadhi. Samadhi cannot remove doubts. It can only be removed by the thinking, "I am Satyam and Jagat is Mithya".

Nidhidhyasanam:

This consists of different types of exercises. Central aim is dwelling on teaching for assimilation and internalization. Here, I am soaked in Advaita Gyanam. Nidhidhyasanam can be performed in different ways. They are:

1. Repeated Sravanam. Keep listening to teaching again and again. Be reminded of the teaching again and again.
2. Repeated reading.
3. Writing on the teaching.
4. Students of equal knowledge share their knowledge.
5. Teaching some one who does not have the knowledge.
6. Try to imitate the behavior of a Jivan Mukta. I try to imitate life of a Gyani, until I get Gyanam. As they say, fake it to make it. Citing example of namaskara to elders by children, this should be encouraged. Although it is initially a mechanical process one can hope that after some time they will discover the inner reverence too. Thus, fake namaskara becomes reverent namaskara. Chapter 2, shlokas 54-72 and other chapters of Gita deal with Jivan mukta and how they behave. It is called an alert life.
7. Samadhi Abhyasaha: This is different from other forms that you can practice any time and at any place. In this, a sitting meditation is performed in a proper posture, as per scriptures. The goal is focusing on any aspect of the teaching or behavioral problem of the

individual. Some people have Kshama, Depression, Kama, Madha, Krodha, and Matsarya. One focuses on his or her area of weakness and meditates on poornatvam.

We don't insist on a type of meditation. During meditation we should dwell on the Shastra. **Purpose of this meditation is not Moksha.** Moksha is not a future event. It is an eternal fact. It is the knowledge that " I am free in spite of the situation". Nidhidhyasanam is not for Gyanam. For Gyanam one performs Sravanam. Nidhidhyasanam is not meant to prove the knowledge. Proving is only through Mananam. Nidhidhyasanam is not meant for any extraordinary experience. All experiences belong to Anatma. They come and go. Mystic experiences have no connection to Self Knowledge. A Gyani may not get any mystic experience. A Gyani may not have any Sidhi.

In this context four types of people were cited:

- 1) Gyani and Sidha;
- 2) Gyani and not Siddha;
- 3) Sidha and not Gyani;
- 4) Neither Gyani nor Sidha.

Among these four, only the Gyani is liberated. An Adharmic Sidha is also possible as known from stories of Rakshasas. Therefore, Nidhidhyasanam is only for assimilation of knowledge. What are the signs of assimilation?

Samasaric reactions to life situations will change. Reactions will be healthy. You will not get a halo. Unhealthy reactions should come down. As you practice Nidhidhyasanam, there will be a gradual reduction in unhealthy reactions. This assimilation can be measured by the following:

1. **Frequency** of unhealthy reactions will be reduced. There will be more shanti or Brahmagyana phalam anubhvam.
2. **Intensity** of reaction is lower. The reaction is usually

felt in mind, body and speech. Now, there will be no physical reaction. While mental reaction may occur, I can control it. I do not respond verbally as well.

3. **Recovery** period is reduced. In the past it could affect one for years. Now, it comes and goes in minutes.

Vedanta does not say we should not have a reaction. It just says we should have a reaction that is healthy. Citing another example, it is like the bouncing back of a rubber ball versus the lack of resilience in a clay ball. Thus, psychological resilience comes from Nidhidhyasanam.

From these three exercises we get Gyana Phalam or Jivan Mukti. This teaching is called:

1. Vedanta or the end part of the Vedas
2. or Gyana Kandam (Karma is not discussed)
3. or Brahma Vidya
4. or Atma Vidya.
5. or knowledge of myself as the ever-free one and it is also called Upanishad.
6. Upanishad: Shankaracharya has defined Upanishad as a teaching in which the freedom is hidden. You are discovering freedom in yourself.

Take Away:

Vedanta says, this world that we are experiencing solidly is not there at all, rather it is a mistaken version of the formless Brahman. Formless Brahman alone exists. Form-full world does not exist.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 1

Greetings All,

Introduction:

Starting his teaching of the Upanishad, Swami Paramarthananda said, as a general introduction he wanted to recollect from his previous discussions on Upanishads. Basic scriptures are called Vedas also known as sources or instruments of Knowledge. They are four in all. They are further divided into two parts. First part is known as Veda Poorva while second part is known as Veda Anta.

Veda Poorva, also known as Karma Kanda, is dedicated to a wide variety of karmas or rituals. All these karmas are broadly classified into three categories. They are:

1. Kayika Karamani: Physical body plays a big part in them.
2. Vachika Karmani: Are in the form of Japas and Parayanams.
3. Manasika Karmani: It is purely through meditation.

All these karmas are also known as Upasanas. Scriptures prescribe these three karmas for obtaining different types of karmaphalams. Therefore, these three karmas are also known as Sadhanas or means of obtaining different aims in life. Karma Kandas also calls them as Sadhana Trayam. These Sadhanas can produce end results called Sadhyams for our benefit. While there are many goals, these goals have been classified into three or the Sadhya Trayam. They are:

- Upadhi Prapthihi: Goals of improving our organs of pleasure, better health, better sense organs, improved mental faculty (intelligence and memory) etc. Thus, the

Samidadhanam required to be performed by a Brahmachari is for improved memory and intelligence. It is also for improved emotional health, (shantihi), for intellectual health (shradha) etc. Overall purpose is to improve instruments of living and enjoyment or improving oneself.

Now, once you feel further improvement is not possible, due to age, health etc., then one can pray for another good body in the next birth as well. This too is Upadhi praptihi.

- **Vishaya Prapthihi:** Is to improve objects of enjoyment. Thus, to obtain a good family, wife children, friends are all wishes that fall in this category. Each of these is important else life can become miserable.
- **Lokaha Prapthihi:** The environment of interaction between Self and objects should be favorable. It should be peaceful. It means improve present atmosphere or replace existing atmosphere. An atmosphere of violence, anger, hatred etc., is after all not very conducive for happiness.

All above are the Karmas or the three means and their respective three ends. Even if a person is lucky to enjoy all of the above three, such a Satvik person will learn from Life's Lessons. Important lessons learned are that all three goals are wonderful, however, inherent in them are deficiencies or Doshas. While these Doshas are relatively good (Preyaha) they are not absolute good or Sreyaha. Thus, there are three Doshas or Dosha Trayam. They are:

1. **Dukhamishritatvam:** This includes desire for acquisition, preservation and loss. All three of them can also cause pain.
2. **Atripthihi:** They will not give us total satisfaction. You will always crave for more. You will tend to compare and there will always be someone with more than you.
3. **Bandhatvam:** When we have them and use them, we soon also

become dependent on them. One becomes attached or addicted. You become more dependent without your own knowledge.

Most of us do not think of these Doshas. Many of us do not worry about it. A slum person prefers his slum even if a better place is offered to him. He will rent the new place and come back to his slum.

However, some people start exploring some goals that are free from these Doshas. To such intelligent people, Vedas say, there are such goals, but they cannot be obtained from Karma Kanda. Karma Kanda only deals with Preyaha. If you want Sreyaha you have to go somewhere else. Such an intelligent seeker is called a Mumukshu. Others are called Bubhukshu. Karma Kanda cannot serve a Mumukshu. Mumukshu has to go Vedanta for this.

So, what is this defect free goal? That defect free goal is Brahman or Moksha. It is not mired in dukha, atripthi and bandhaha.

Where is this Brahman and how to acquire it? Vedanta says you can never obtain it because that defect free one is in the form of the “Seeker” in you. You are that. I also have a very difficult time swallowing the idea that I am that defect free Brahman. Everything I have, has defects, including my body, mind and intellect. They all have limitations. All my experiences, so far, have proven my limitation. Even my children tell me that I was a terrible parent. In this context I have a big doubt if I am a defect free Self. There is a very big gap between what I think of myself versus what Vedanta thinks of me. I sometimes feel like dropping the Gita, Upanishads and the Guru.

If I am born in a culture where Shraddha in scriptures is important, I will not drop the Upanishad. A boys Upanayana ceremony lasts four days and on the last day the Brahmachari

worships Shradha Devi. To such a person the Shradha comes that the Vedas cannot go wrong. I develop deep faith in the Vedas. So, I need to question my conclusions. I have taken it for granted, "I am finite". I need to re-analyze my conclusion. Therefore, I have to start a Self Enquiry to verify if my conclusion is valid or not. For a long time human beings thought the Sun went around the Earth. Then came a person who said that the Earth went around the Sun or that we are not in a Geo-centric universe. This scientist was harassed and rejected.

When I enter into Self Enquiry, I find, I don't have the instruments for such an enquiry. Just as we have a telescope to study the stars and a microscope to study bacteria, I don't have an instrument to study the Self. Here I am enquiring into the Enquirer. Regular instruments are not useful for such an enquiry. Such regular instruments are also known as Pauresheya Pramanani because they are extrovert in nature and not useful for such an enquiry.

I need a special mirror, one to reveal my real "I". This is known as Shabda Pramanam or a verbal mirror. When somebody tells you, "you look jaundiced" (yellow) it is a Shabda Pramana or a Shabda mirror. When I try to study the Upanishad by myself, I find they use peculiar methods that are different from objective science. Shastra has to use words to reveal my Self.

Other methods will only give us an intellectual and in-direct knowledge. Other methods tend to objectify. Description of the Brahman is not one of an object rather it is one of my own Self. If not, Student will say he has understood but not experienced the Brahman. This knowledge and experience dichotomy (or division) does not occur in Brahmagyanam. The student should not come to a definite conclusion. Therefore, a Guru alone can make the Upanishad speak to you. What is the method used by the Guru? He uses six factors in the primary teaching also known as Tatparyam. It is " You are what you

want to be in life". It will teach that you are a secure and immortal being. This teaching has to be provided consistently, again and again until the student nods his head in understanding.

Take Away:

There is a very big gap between what I think of myself versus what Vedanta thinks of me. It is very difficult to believe that I am that defect free Brahman.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 69, Chapter 5

Greetings All,

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda started Chapter 5 today. He said in chapters 2, 3 and 4 respectively, Sri Krishna spoke about two topics. He spoke about Sadhana and Lifestyle. Recapping those teachings Swamiji said:

- 1. Sadhana:** Regarding Sadhana he made it clear that everyone has to go through Karma Yoga Sadhana and Gyana yoga sadhana. There is no choice. Karma Yoga is the means towards Gyana Yoga and Gyana Yoga is the means towards liberation.

Karma yoga is a means and Gyana Yoga too is a means while

moksha is the end. You can have a choice between means and a choice between ends but not a choice between a mean and an end. One can choose between pants or shirts. Here, there is choice. Choice is only between similar. Thus, one can't choose between a pant and a shirt. Similarly, one cannot choose between Karma Yoga and Gyana Yoga. Once you choose an end, it means the means is a given.

Citing an example, getting into a bus is meaningful only when you have chosen not only the bus but also the destination. You cannot choose the bus without choosing the destination. We are not getting into the bus for a joy ride. Similarly, if you have chosen a destination, you have to choose the means as well.

Citing another example, suppose I go to a doctor for stomach pain and the doctor prescribes a tablet. I cannot get away from not taking the tablet. If I chose the end of removing the pain, I have to choose the means as well. Therefore, choosing the means and end is complementary; one choice will validate the other choice and the other way around as well. Thus, Karma Yoga is the way to come to Gyana yoga. Gyana yoga is the way to Moksha.

Citing another example, it is just like a person occupies both the father status and son status. With regard to his son, he is the father and with regard to his father, he is the son. From Karma yoga's perspective Gyana Yoga is an end. From Moksha's perspective Gyana Yoga is the means.

After explaining quite a bit by Sri Krishna, Arjuna is still not clear. His confusion is with respect to sadhana. This is an area of confusion to many people.

There are people who think karma yoga and gyana yoga are alternative means of liberation. Many still think and talk about different paths to liberation. Thus, if you are an active person, you attain moksha through karma and if you are

an intellectual person, you attain moksha through Gyana yoga.

Even Shankaracharya struggled to clarify this confusion. He too says karma yoga cannot lead you to liberation, it will take you to Gyana yoga and Gyana yoga will lead to liberation; this is one part of the teaching;

Then there is second part of teaching with regard to the lifestyle. A person can lead two types of lifestyles, one is life of activity in society and the other is life of seclusion or life of work and life of withdrawal.

or Life in society and life in seclusion.

2. Life style:

Sri Krishna described two types of lifestyle. One is a person who is active in society and other is one who leads a life of seclusion.

Active in society is known as Grihasthashrama. While one leading a life of seclusion is known as Sanyasahrama. In olden times, after Gurukula, both lifestyles were open to a person. A lifestyle is also called a Nishta. Sri Krishna points out that every person has a choice in lifestyle. One can be a Grihastha or a monk. Whatever lifestyle or ashrama one adopts in both of them you have to have follow Karma yoga and then follow up with Gyana Yoga.

Grihasthashrama Dharma is Karma Yoga for householders. Sanyasahrama is Karma Yoga for monks. Both have their rites, pujas and rituals prescribed.

Grihastha will have a sacred thread while a Sanyasi has a danda. Grihastha has got rituals, prayers, pujas and parayanams. Sanyasi too has rituals, prayers, pujas and parayanams. The type of parayanams may vary.

For a grihastha Vishnu Sahasranama and similar mantras are emphasized. For the sanyasi,

Upanishad, Bhashyams, etc. are emphasized.

For a grihastha, saguna ishvara namas are given, like Namashivaya, Narayanaya etc.; for a Sanyasi, Upanishad mahavakya mantras are given for japa, or Omkara japa, and other similar mantras are also given. For both, puja is a requirement. All these are necessary to develop a mental conditioning required for reaching Gyana yoga. A sanyasi should qualify himself to enter Gyana yoga. A grihastha also has to qualify himself to come to Gyana yoga.

Sri Krishna asks all to follow their Svadharma.

Once ready, both should come to Gyana Yoga. Thus, in sadhana, there is no choice. In lifestyle, however, there is choice. Each lifestyle has plusses and minuses. For Gihastashrama the plus points are he is able to perform Pancha Maha Yagna, perform noble services for society, he has security through his children, family and wealth. The minuses are that he has equal responsibilities. He has to raise his children, provide education, marry off his daughters etc. He has to face the fears and anxieties related to raising a family.

In Sanyasa ashrama, however, there is no responsibility, no wife, no husband, no children and you need not bother about anything. If you get hungry, ask Bhavathi Bhiksham Dehi; somebody will give Bhiksha. So, while there is no responsibility there is also no security.

So, every ashrama has got it's plus and minus points. Therefore, Sri Krishna says, take to any ashrama and pursue both the sadhanas and get liberation.

After listening to all this Arjuna wanted further clarification. He wants to know about the Nishta, when there is a choice. **Decision-making is always difficult. This is so, because we don't want to face the consequences of our decision.**

Arjuna's mind at the moment is voting for Sanyasa. He does not want to kill. In crisis, he wants to escape with Sri Krishna's blessings. His question is which is better, Grihastha or Sanyasa? Sri Krishna is going to talk about Sanyasa Yoga.

Shloka # 1: Arjuna said:

The renunciation of works, Krishna, and again, their performance you praise. Tell me for certain which of the two is better.

In spite of Sri Krishna's clear teaching, Arjuna asks: Sri Krishna, you glorify both ashramas. You have glorified life of activity (grihasthashrama). You have also glorified Sanyasa Ashrama, life of seclusion. The two are contradictory. So, Sri Krishna, tell me, which one is better of the two? Both are opposites. I cannot follow both, life of seclusion and life of activity, at the same time.

In fact, the grihastha is supposed to be the pillar of the society. He is the one who nourishes all the other three ashramas because all the three ashramas live on Bhiksha. Thus, a brahmachari has to live on Bhiksha; a vanaprasthi has to live on Bhiksha and a sanyasi also has to live on Bhiksha alone. So, if the three ashramas have to receive Bhiksha, somebody has to give it. So, he is the one who gives Bhiksha.

Some other monastic religions glorify Sanyasa. Ashrama is a place of spiritual sadhana. Ashrama can happen in family life too. Such a person is unaffected even in his family life. Janaka Maharaja is often cited as an example of a Grihastha Gyani.

Thus, says Swamiji, it is not a choice between Sadhanas rather it is a choice between lifestyles.

Shloka # 2:

Sri Krishna said:

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Both renunciation and Karma Yoga promote the supreme good; but of the two, Karma Yoga is superior to the renunciation of works.

Sri Krishna says, both ashramas are equally good for both sadhanas. In Vedanta the term Dvanda is used. It means everything in creation has a good and a bad aspect to it.

Both ashramas are equally good for following karma yoga sadhana and Gyana yoga sadhana. Karma yoga can be efficiently followed in grihastha ashrama; but for Gyana yoga the obstacles for Grihastha are many while you require an undistracted life. The many duties of grihasthashrama are all seen as obstacles. Therefore, in grihastha ashrama, karma yoga can be ideally followed;

In sanyasa ashrama, karma yoga cannot be ideally followed because he does not have the resources to do a lot of karmas; there is no money with them; he cannot do any good karma; he has to manage with limited activities, like japa, puja, susrusha, etc. Therefore, there are certain advantages in following some sadhanas and some disadvantages in following other sadhanas. However, in both, you can follow the sadhana and attain liberation; therefore in both ashramas one can follow the sadhana and attain liberation.

Shastra also talks of the ashrama that fits a type of person. Sanyasa requires a particular mental make up that is not an easy one. Sanyasa ashrama is dangerous for an unprepared person. Sri Krishna, says, for majority of people life of activity is safer and ideal. In Vedas there are rules when one

goes from Brahmacharya to Grihastha. From Brahmacharya one can also go to Sanyasashrama with Guru's advice and Shishya's acceptance.

The greatest risk of sanyasashrama is that you can't go back. It is an irreversible process.

So, Sri Krishna says, Grihastha Ashrama is a better choice for majority. He says Gita is for general public, while Upanishad is for evolved one's. While Upanishad prefers Sanyasahrama, Gita considers Grihasthashrama as the best. We should keep in mind that in Gita, both the Teacher and Student were grihastas.

Shloka # 3:

5.3

Know him to be a perpetual renouncer who neither shuns nor seeks, O mighty-armed! One who is above such contraries is really liberated from bondage.

Now that Sri Krishna has recommended Grihasta Ashrama, is there any way one can get advantage of both Ashramas? This is a thought that can come in a person's mind. Sri Krishna, addressing this question, says, there is a method. He says one needs to handle Raga and Dvesha in Grihastashrama. Householder's life is influenced by many factors. It is said nine planets influence a householder. A son-in -law is considered the tenth planet. He is a planet over which you have no control. Whatever he does affects your daughter but you cannot do anything about it.

Thus, there are many relationship that are similar, in which you have no control. When you get married to a girl and you place a knot on one neck simultaneously you

are putting knots on many other necks as well. You are

immediately related to the girl's family. All these knots are factors that can influence you but you cannot control them. Therefore, you have to learn to manage your ragah-dveshah. Whether your likes and dislikes are fulfilled or not, you have to learn to navigate through life without being affected. This requires tremendous strength; And therefore Sri Krishna says a grihastha is a sanyasi, if he has learnt to handle likes and dislikes; For one who has managed his ragah-dveshah the house itself is an ashrama That is the trick. Sri Krishna , however, does not say how we are to manage Raga and dvesha.

Take Away:

Decision-making is always difficult. This is so, because we don't want to face the consequences of our decision.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 68

Chapter 4

Greetings All,

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda summarized Chapter 4. This chapter is broadly classified into three areas:

1. Ishavara Avatar.

2. Gyana Karma Sanyasa, the central theme of the chapter.
3. Gyana Sadhana Phalani or means of knowledge and its benefits.

Ishvara Avatara: This is discussed in shlokas #1 through #15. Here Sri Krishna shows the difference between Avatara and Jiva. Superficially, while both appear to be same and both go through same life stages (birth, family etc) there are three main differences. They are:

1. Cause of Avatara (Karana),
2. Swaroopa, and
3. Purpose (Upadesha Lakshayam).

Cause: At the karana level, Jiva's janma is caused by ignorance; it is because of ignorance Jiva has got the ego; and it is because of the ego, he acquires punya papam, and it is because of punya papam, he is forced to take this body; therefore for the jiva, janma is a fall because he is helpless. So agyanam is the karanam.

For God, it is omniscience and compassion. Here, he descends to uplift human beings. One has fallen while other has descended. Hence for Ishvara, the word Avatara is used or Avatarati. Therefore, for Jiva Agyanam is the cause of his birth while for God it is his Karuna.

Swaroopam: Jiva comes about because of ignorance. It does not know its higher nature. So it is known as Bandha Swaroopa. For Ishwara it is Leela. It is all a game. God does everything with a smile, even killing of a Rakshasa. So, he is known as Mukta Swaroopa. In case of Jiva his body is made of the five elements. Maya produces the five elements and they in turn produce the Jiva Sharira.

In case of Ishwara, Maya straightaway becomes a Sharira. There is no time gap. There is no waiting for nine months. Narasimha avatara is an example of this. So, Maya Shariram becomes God, while Jiva becomes a Bhautika Shariram.

Purpose: In case of Jiva it comes into being to exhaust its punya and papam's. They can be exhausted only through Sukha and Dukha. This requires a body. Even in dream we exhaust punya and papam through the dream body. My Punya and Papam determine the type of body I get. Even animals go through same process. The only difference is that they do not acquire new Karmas.

Ishvara 's avatara, however, is not for punya papa ksheyaha. The Lord is punya-papa atitaha because he does not have Agyanam. Lord is responsible for arrival and maintenance of creation. He is the srishti karta as well as stithi karta. Normally he does not get involved in human affairs. He has given us Dharma Shastra's to follow. We are supposed to follow it. However, when we do not follow it, he is forced to take Avatar. One way he maintains Dharma is through directly removing the source of problems. Destruction of Rakshas is an example. Second way is to educate humanity to take more responsibility. Here, Sri Rama and Sri Krishna Avatara's come to mind. Rama taught by living. Ramayanam (Rama-Ayanam) means Rama's Dharma marga.

In Sri Krishna's case it is his teaching, not his life, that is the main focus. This is also known as Dharma Rakshanam. He tells Arjuna, through you, I have decided to revive the Vedic teaching. Therefore, revival of dharma, both by teaching and destroying the adharmic people, is the purpose of avathara.

Thus, the cause is different; the nature is different and the purpose is also different.

Sri Krishna said as the Lord I taught the Veda in the beginning of the creation and again as Rama Avathara. I am now again teaching the same wisdom, through Krishna Shariram as well.

And having talked about avathara Sri Krishna concluded that discussion by making a great statement that "whoever knows the

Lord completely" that person will get freedom. Here the emphasis is on "Knows the Lord completely", because the Lord has got two natures. One is the higher and the other is the lower nature. The higher nature of the Lord is never subject to birth and death. "I am never born" he says.

It should be noted that Avatara is not discussed in any other chapter of Gita.

Gyana Karma Sanyasa: This is the central theme of chapter 4 and is discussed in shlokas 16-24. Here Sri Krishna points out that there are two types of Karma Sanyasas or renunciations.

1. One is becoming a monk giving up society and Karmas. He pursues a higher goal. It is an external renunciation. It is also considered as the fourth stage of life. It is a ritualistic stage.
2. By discovering detachment like the Lotus where the water does not wet the leaf. And how can one accomplish this? There is only one method of accomplishing this. You have to switch or change your understanding about yourselves. Self-knowledge has to be there and self-elevation has to be there as well. The body cannot avoid karma association. The mind too cannot avoid karma association. Both body and mind are integrally related to the world; therefore interactions are inevitable.

Therefore, you have to discover a different eye, which is higher than the body mind complex, which is called Atma Tatvam. Through Atma Tatvam, I will recognize the asangha and akasha tulya atma. Comparison to Akasha is made here, as Akasha is not polluted by anything. Similarly, I have

to perform self-enquiry and clearly understand I am not the body and I am not the mind.

The body-mind-complex is part of this creation, so, let its interactions continue. I, meanwhile, should be like the actor who identifies with the role he is playing on the stage and

becomes a different person once he gets back to green room. He forgets his stage role identity. He recognizes that I am different from all these roles.

This requires Sravanam, Mananam and Nidhidhysanam. It is called internal renunciation or Gyana Karma Sanyasaha (renunciation of action through knowledge). You are performing action without any attachments. There is no ownership of the action. A man sells his house but remains in it. He, thus, becomes a trustee. He thinks the house belongs to God.

This objectivity removes impact of Life situation. I have flexibility to recover and live. Although he is fully involved in action he appears as if he is not at all involved. He appears detached. It is a difficult process to practice.

While describing the Gyani, Sri Krishna talks of Grihasta and Sanyasi Gyani's. Brahmarapanam is a householder or Grihasta Gyani. Therefore, liberation is not dependent on Ashrama but dependent on Wisdom.

One who takes Sanyasa should pursue Gyanam. Chinamayanandaji gave his teachings first then he asked persons to take Sanyasa. So, Gyanam is very important, not Ashrama.

All shlokas in this section are very important.

Gyana Sadhana Phalani: Shloka 26-42.

These shlokas describe the actions to be taken for obtaining knowledge. Twelve supporting Sadhanas are mentioned towards obtaining knowledge. Two additional Sadhanas are also described. So, the fourteen sadhanas are:

1. Daiva Yagna: Puja to God
2. Vishaya Bhoga Yagna: Every action of ours should be an offering to God, including food.
3. Gama Yagna: Mastery of our senses.
4. Kshama Yagna: Mastery of mind. You should control the

mind and not the other way around.

5. Dravya Yagna: Practicing charity.
6. Tapo Yagna: Moderation in everything.
7. Yoga Yagna: Ashatanga Yoga.
8. Svadhyaya: Learning and chanting scriptures.
9. Gyan Yagna:
 1. Spiritual Self knowledge and
 2. Other disciplines that help us with knowledge.
10. Pranayama Yagna: Performed with devotion as a spiritual practice.
11. Ahara Niyama Yagna: Discipline in eating. This helps control our mind as well.
12. Guru Yagna: It is Guru Seva to one who can communicate the teachings of the shastras.
13. Sradha: Faith in scriptures and Guru. Asking questions to seek clarification. Keep in mind Guru and Shashtra do not have anything to lose.
14. Tatparaha: Commitment. Do not criticize scriptures. Develop conviction and follow through.

While all 14 are under Gyana Sadhanas, Gyanam is the most important one of them all. Only Gyanam can remove ignorance. Scripture is like a mirror that can show your true Self. It is a Shashtra darpanam. All other Sadhanas are optional. You can choose one or several of them to practice. Gyana Yagnam is not optional.

Sri Krishna also talked about the four Gyana Phalams.

They are:

1. Moha Nasha: Knowledge gives us power to face the future. I can face life, whatever comes.
2. Papa Nasha: All papams incurred upto the time of knowledge are all eliminated. All karmas are eliminated and Prarabhda Karmas are defanged.
3. Karma Nasha: Sarva karma nasha. This includes papa and punya karmas.

4. Jiva Ishwara Aikyam: He recognizes the essential One. Just as in the Ocean and the wave, the water is the essence so also he recognizes that God and I are one. Aham Brahma Asmi.

Sri Krishna then told Arjuna that he should follow Karma yoga and then follow up with Gyana Yoga and thus become free.

This concludes Chapter 4.

Take Away:

The root cause of human problems is Ahamkara or ego or the “ I am the doer” feeling. Here Gita offers us some methods to obtain the detachment from Ahamkara.

1. You have to switch or change your understanding about yourselves.
2. Therefore, you have to discover a different eye called Atma Tatvam through which to recognize the Atma.
3. Clearly understand that I am not this body and I am not this mind. This conviction has to be there.
4. Be like an actor on the stage. Perform your part immersed in it, all the while remembering you are not that part.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Saddharshanam, Class 23

Greetings All,

Shloka # 39:

To say there is duality during the inquiry, but non-duality in the knowledge of the Supreme is not right. The tenth man's tenth-ness is one and same when he is lost before the search and when he is found later.

Continuing his teaching, Swami Paramarthananda said, this is a very important shloka. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi talks about the nature of Advaitam. He says a clear understanding of Advaitam is required for understanding mukti, knowledge and bondage. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi points out that Advaitam is not an event produced in time or in the future. It is not even a particular state such as say a mystical state. It is also not part of an experience we work for. We need to be clear that Advaitam is not an event nor a state nor an experience. All the three are bound by time or they occur in time. Therefore, the Adavaitam or Non-duality that one obtains in Samadhi, Sushupthi or Pralayam is a misnomer. It is actually a temporary state of Advaitam. Sushupthi Advaitam is temporary because it occurs only in Sushupthi. It is the same with Samadhi as well where the state is available only in Samadhi. Temporary Advaitam is a false name for Dvaitam or unmanifest Dvaitam. All three states are Dvaitam. Thus, Advaitam in Sushupthi becomes Dvaitam upon waking. So it is for the other two states as well.

True Advaitam is a fact that obtains all the time. Vedanta says a fact has to be understood as an eternally occurring fact. This understanding is called Advaita Gyanam. This knowledge, Advaita Gyanam, is not an experience. Experience is a mental event, which will be displaced by other events. An experience is a displaceable mental event. However, Knowledge

is a mental event that cannot be displaced by any future experience. It is permanently there. Thus, the knowledge that $2+2=4$ continues, even if you are feeling happy, sad, hot or cold. It is not displaced. So, knowledge does not go with experience.

So, what we need is Advaita Gyanam not Advaita experience. Knowledge is always associated with fact(s). An experience may or may not be related to a fact. Thus, Sunrise is an experience. Sunrise, however, is not associated with the fact that earth is going around its own axis. While we experience the flat earth, it is not a fact. Thus, experience can be a fact or a myth.

Here knowledge related to facts is being described. Knowledge of Advaitam, since it is associated with fact, can't be displaced by a future Dvaitam. Therefore, while the Advaita Gyani continues to experience Dvaitam in waking, sleep and dream states it will not disturb his knowledge of Advaitam. This is highlighted in the expression "Aham Brahma Asmi". "I am Brahman" is to be known as a fact. Once known, this knowledge will not be displaced by any other experience including Dvaitam.

At the time of Sadhana there is Dvaitam or bondage. At time of knowledge of Reality there will be Advaitam.

Advaitam and moksha are synonymous. "I will become free later" is the biggest mistake made by a seeker. It is not a future event. Even so, we often ask, when will I get Moksha? Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says such a statement is not correct.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi gave the example of the tenth man referenced in Vedanta. Very briefly, ten boys were crossing a river. One of the ten was their leader. After crossing, to ensure all crossed safely, the leader counted them. He counted only nine. He reportedly missed counting himself. He is the famous tenth boy, who was thought to be missing but never was.

So too in life, we look for peace and security just as looking for the tenth boy (man). The boy was the tenth boy before and after the knowledge. At that particular time and moment this was a fact. By knowledge, he just dropped the notion that the tenth boy was lost. Nothing new was involved. It was just the dropping of a notion. While dropping the notion "the boy was lost" was simple, the emotional consequences of this are enormous. For Ananda, for spiritual awakening etc., we are looking for the tenth man. Shastra calls the tenth man the Brahman. After getting this man we still continue hunting for Brahman. Here Shastra tells us the tenth man is not an event. It says, " You are Brahman, You were and You will always be". Once this knowledge comes in, all future experiences cannot displace this knowledge. " I am Brahman despite my emotional condition."

The tenth man was there all the time, but was thought to be lost. Before enquiry, after enquiry and when the tenth man was attained, the tenth man never went anywhere. He was always there.

Therefore moksha is not an event. It is a fact. Advaita is a fact. You only need the knowledge to know it.

This shloka was about discovering the tenth man the Atma.

Shloka # 40:

When man thinks " I do work"; he becomes bound to enjoy the fruits of action also. If the doer-ship is washed away by inquiry, the results of the three types of actions perish. That alone is liberation.

Almost the same idea presented in previous shloka is discussed here, only this time from perspective of the individual or Jiva.

Moksha is dropping of a notion. When I say Aham, there are two parts to it. One part is Chaitanyam (Atma Amsha) and second

part is Ahamkara Amsha consisting of the body-mind-complex with borrowed Chaitanyam. The Ahamkara Amsha is also called Chiddabasha. This mixture of Atma with Ahamkara is the “I”. Atma cannot say “ I” as Atma cannot perform transactions. Ahamkara itself exists due to Atma. Of this inseparable mixture, Atma is Satyam while Ahamkara is Mithya.

Kartrutvam, doership, belongs to the unreal Ahamkara Part. Doership does not belong to Atma. This mixed “ I” is performing all transactions. The same mixed “ I” attains knowledge as well. In ignorance, I am not aware of my Atma nature. So, I take myself to be Ahamkara. However, when reality is known, unreal becomes real. When waking is not known, dream is real. During ignorance, I am Ahamkara and it is real. For this Ahamkara, doer-ship is real. Therefore, all Karmas with their resulting Karma Phalams are also real. This is what makes astrological charts important.

Once the three Karmas are real, the Bhokta also becomes real, as does Samsara with its Sukha and Dukha. All this happens due to Ahamkara being considered as real. Until this truth is known, Samsara cannot be destroyed.

Therefore, Ahamkara must be made unreal. Dream can be converted to unreal when you wake up to a higher reality. Therefore Original Consciousness (OC) must be claimed as myself. This is Atma Gyanam. Falsification of Ahamkara through Atma Gyanam is moksha. Atma Gyanam is knowledge not an event or experience.

Thus, Vedanta teaches you that you are not a Karta nor the Karma nor the resulting Karma Phalam. This teaching is performed through Guru Shastra Vidya. Here, Ahamkara (or body) is not physically eliminated; rather we are falsifying the body. In spiritual awakening the body does not disappear. It is just a change in my understanding. It is similar to our understanding that the earth is round while our experience is that it is flat. This is called falsification. Doer-ship is

falsified. With this falsification, all three Karmas (Sanchita, Prarabhda, Agami) are destroyed. Prarabhda experience continues and is real for the body; however, the Gyani sees it as a Mithya.

Therefore, all are falsified. This falsification of Karmas is Mukti.

This shloka is about falsification of Ahamkara and with it, all the three Karmas.

Shloka # 41:

When there is the sense of bondage, anxiety for liberation is there. By the inquiry “for whom is the bondage?” one’s own Self, the ever free, is itself established. Then where is the thought of bondage and where is the concern for liberation?

The nature of Advaitam must be understood as well as Moksha. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says, really speaking Moksha is not possible. Moksha is defined as removal of bondage. Vedanta says there is nothing called bondage. It is only a notion. When this is the case where is the question of removing it? Therefore accepting moksha means accepting bondage. However, moksha means freedom just as in the Rope and Snake metaphor. There is really no snake to be removed. Reality is known once I understand that there is no snake to be eliminated. In Vedanta there is no Moksha. It is only a figurative expression for “no bondage”. Knowledge of the “absence of bondage” is figuratively called Moksha. Therefore for a Gyani there is neither bondage nor Moksha.

Take Away:

1. Advaitam is not an event nor a state nor an experience. It is knowledge even as $2+2=4$.
2. True Advaitam is a fact that obtains all the time. Just as the knowledge $2+2=4$ is there all the time.
3. Shastra calls the tenth man the Brahman.

4. We need to discover our inner tenth man.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 67

Chapter 4

Greetings All,

Shloka # 36:

Even if, among all sinners, you are the very worst, by this raft of knowledge you will go beyond sin.

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, from shloka # 36 onwards Sri Krishna is talking about Gyana phalam. In shloka # 36 he talked about the following benefits by obtaining Gyanam: 1) Sarva moha nasha, 2) Sarvatra Jivatma Paramatma Aikyam and 3) Sarva Papa Nasha.

Shloka # 37:

As a kindled fire reduces all fuels to ashes, so, Arjuna !
does the fire of knowledge reduce all works to ashes.

4. Sarva Karma Nasha:

Now in this shloka Sri Krishna talks about a fourth benefit of Gyanam called Sarva Karma Nasha. All three karmas, Sanchita, Prarabhda and Agami Karmas are all destroyed with knowledge. Just as a glove insulates one from an electric shock so also Gyanam insulates one from the effects of Karma. While our karmic events don't change, our response to them now changes.

The karma cannot affect a Gyani anymore. He is insulated from its effects. It is as though stopped.

Sri Krishna also compares knowledge to a huge conflagration. Everything is burnt in the fire of Gyana including karmas.

The fire for such a conflagration, however, has to be well kindled. A weak fire can be extinguished by a large piece of wood thrown into the fire. Half knowledge, compared here to a weak fire, will not help. Knowledge needs to be obtained from a Parampara Acharya. Sravanam, mananam and nidhidhyasanam are all required. Knowledge obtained in this manner, from a qualified teacher, will reduce everything to ashes.

What is the difference between Papa Nasha and Karma Nasha?
Shloka # 36 talked about Papa Nasha while Shoka # 37 is talking about Karma Nasha.

Papa nasha only refers to papa karmas. Here Karmas mean both papa and punya karmas. Both fall under Samsara. Punya leads to Svarga. But eventually one has to return from Svargam as well. Swamiji compares it to going to America and coming back to Chennai with its heat, humidity and mosquitoes. Thus, Punya is a sorrow that comes later and is a Bandha (attachment). So, Gyani goes beyond both papam and punyam.

Shloka # 38:

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Nothing exists here as purifying as knowledge. Perfected in yoga, in course of time, one wins it in one's own Self.

With Shloka # 37 Gyana Phalam is over. Four Gyana phalams were explained. They were:

- 1) Sarva moha nasha,
- 2) Sarvatra Jivatma Paramatma Aikyam,
- 3) Sarva Papa Nasha and
- 4) Sarva Karma Nasha.

Now Sri Krihna wants to conclude with some dos and don'ts or Sadhanas.

He says there is no greater purifier than knowledge. There are many purifiers such as Ganga Jalam, Rudra mantra japam, etc. All purifiers can destroy papams. However, only Knowledge can destroy Avidya. No other purifier can destroy Avidya or Agyanam.

Who can get this knowledge? Only qualified and prepared persons can get this knowledge. Such a person is known as **Samsidhaha**. The method of preparation is known as Yogaha. Yogaha are two fold. They are Karma Yoga and Ashtanga Yoga. Following these two yogas also means leading a religious life. Vedas have decided upon a life style for spiritual growth. Vedic culture is meant for spiritual growth. It, however, does not ignore material growth. If we follow this Vedic life we will reach this knowledge. This is called Yogaha. It is a growth of spiritual, emotional and intellectual attributes. Put in another way it is Tatva Bodha's Sadhana Chatushtaya Sampathihi. This knowledge can only occur in a pure mind. When asked how long it will take, Sri Krishna does not comment. Rather, he says, enjoy the journey.

Shloka # 39:

4.39

The man of faith, who has mastered his senses and who is intent on it, wins knowledge. Winning knowledge, he attains without delay the peace supreme.

In the previous shloka Yoga was mentioned as a Sadhana or a way of religious life and a qualified person was called a Samsiddhaha. In this shloka more sadhanas are prescribed.

Shradha is now prescribed. It is faith in the validity of scriptures until one gets knowledge. As you study the Gita you will notice that all your doubts are answered at some point during the study. Every Acharya also accepts questions.

Siddhi Grantha is a text that raises a lot of questions and clarifies doubts. This attitude of faith is called Sradha. Such a person is called Sradhavan. Such a person gets knowledge. It should be noted that Vedanta also accepts questions from current situations as well.

Another sadhana mentioned is **Tatparam** or sincere commitment to the Teacher. Explaining this, Swamiji said in the early stages of his Gita lectures he had Q & A sessions at the end of the class. However, he found, most people did not come prepared. They would ask questions that were not relevant to the teaching in the class. One should revisit the teaching and this is known as manaha. Only from this process can legitimate doubts arise. This is showing commitment to the teacher.

The next sadhana discussed by Sri Krishna is Sense control and focusing capacity or **Samyatindriyaha**. So, all above-mentioned sadhanas are required. They are:

- Samsidhaha, a qualified person.
- Sradha, faith in validity of scriptures.
- Tatparam, sincere commitment to the teacher.
- Samyatindriyaha, control of senses and a capacity for focus.

All four are required for Gyanam. Such a person gets peace

that surpasses all understanding. Sri Krishna promises this benefit in this very life.

He also says with Gyanam we also need to address or overcome some of our deeply entrenched Vasanas as well. This may take some time.

Our actions and responses are governed by two factors, one is our knowledge; and another is our vasana; knowledge will take care of part of the problem, but we have to handle our vasanas, or habits as well.

Habit changing requires deliberate effort. It is not that easy to change well entrenched habits like emotional problems, inferiority complex, lack of self-image jealousy, anger, irritation etc. They are all well entrenched and one needs to handle one of them at a time. Only by controlling our Vasanas can we attain true knowledge.

Shloka # 40:

The ignorant, the unfaithful, the doubting self perishes.
Neither this world nor the next nor happiness accrues to the
doubter.

In the previous shloka Sri Krishna talked about positive traits. Here, now, he talks about negative traits. He describes them as follows:

1. Ignorance: with respect to the world. He says every human being has to be informed about the world to lead a normal life. Worldly knowledge is required.
2. Ashradha: Lack of faith in scriptures.
3. Samshayaha: Doubt.

Of the three Samshayaha or the doubting Thomas is the most problematic. Suppose a person is not worldly he may not get

worldly ananada, however, due to his shraddha he will obtain Parloka Sukham. One who does not believe in scriptures but believes in worldly pleasures, he may not get Paraloka sukham but he will get Iha Loka sukham. However, a Samshaya Atma even with worldly knowledge will not obtain Iha loka Sukham nor Para Loka Sukham.

So Samshaya is the worst enemy. Trust in family member, co-workers, even own driver etc., is required. Trust involves risk. Trust is very important in life. It is required for Vedanta as well.

Shloka # 41:

Arjuna! works bind not him who is vigilant, who through yoga, has renounced works and who has slain doubts with knowledge.

Here Sri Krishna is summing up the sadhanas and the phalams. A person has to go through three stages of sadhana:

3. **First Stage:** Yogaha or yoga-samnyasta-karmanam. This means Gyanam and what is the Gyanam? Remembering at all times that I am the Atma, which is an Akarta. A person gets detached from all actions. Since actions belong to the body-mind-complex, he allows the body-mind-complex to function in the world; but he does not have attachment or identification and therefore he has renounced the karma identification.
4. **Second Stage:** This stage called Gyana-sanchina-samshayam is where he negates all his doubts by gaining conviction through mananam. Gyanam means conviction; I should be convinced of this knowledge and I should study until I am convinced.
5. **Third stage:** is Atmavantam. This is thenidhidhy asanam stage. In this stage, a person is alert and remembers the teaching at all times. Through the teaching, Gyanam

must be available in my day-to-day life. So, Atmavan is one who leads an alert life and one who keeps himself in this state of knowledge during all transactions. Due to his alertness, Karma cannot bind the one who has done the shravana, manana and nidhidhyasanam.

Shloka # 42:

अत्मवान् विद्यावान् विद्यावान् विद्यावान्
विद्यावान् विद्यावान् विद्यावान् विद्यावान् 4.42

Therefore, O Bharata Prince! With the sword of knowledge slay the doubt in the heart born of nescience; resort to Yoga and stand up.

Here Sri Krishna advises Arjuna that he should get rid of all his doubts. For purification of mind, follow Karma yoga, then for enlightenment follow Gyana Yoga. By the sword of understanding all doubts about Karma Yoga and Gyana Yoga will be destroyed. In any event, all doubts are products of ignorance. With knowledge, destroy ignorance. This you alone can do. Guru cannot do it for you. I can only support you.

You are not yet fit for sanyasa yet. Therefore, be a grihastha. Do your duty, even though it is a bitter and unpleasant one, of killing your own kith and kin. You cannot avoid it. Therefore, O Arjuna, get up, take your bow, arrow and do your duty.

With this Krishna completes this present discourse.

Take Away:

As per shloka # 41, try to reach a state of alertness of mind at all times. Most of the time our mind is not alert. This alert mind is also a detached mind.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Saddarshanam, Class 22

Greetings All,

Shloka # 37:

The knowledge of the established Truth itself is an accomplishment. Other accomplishments are indeed comparable to a dream. How can a dream be true to one who has woken up? One who abides in Truth does not enter Maya again.

Continuing his teaching, Swami Paramarthananda said,

in this shloka Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi points out what the attitude of a Vedantic student towards Sidhi or miraculous powers should be. These Sidhi's are described in Puranas as well as in Yoga Shastras. The Ashta maha Sidhi's are:

1. Anima: To become small or reducing one's body even to the size of an atom.
2. Mahima: To become large or expanding one's body to an infinitely large size.
3. Laghima: To become light in weight or becoming almost weightless.
4. Garima: Size being same increase in weight or becoming infinitely heavy.
5. Prapthi: Capacity to reach any place at will by thought or having unrestricted access to all places.
6. Prakamya: Capacity to perform anything at will or materialization or realizing whatever one desires.
7. Ishtwa: Being with God or being over nature or

possessing absolute lordship.

8. **Vastva:** Controlling others including their minds or the power to subjugate all.

In addition to above many smaller Sidhi's also are described in shastras. Means of attaining these Sidhis are also described. Thus: Gems, Mantras, Aushadha (herbs) and Yoga Chakras will all get us Sidhis. Poorvajanma, past life, also can give us Sidhis. Even the Bhagavathpurana has described many Sidhis.

Describing the attitude a Vedantic student should take to Sidhi, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi suggests the following:

1. Sidhis do exist. They are in Shastra Pramanam.
2. Sidhis have nothing to do with spirituality. Spiritual wisdom is possible without Sidhis. Acquisition of Sidhis does not necessarily get you spiritual knowledge. Many Rakshasas were Sidhas who observed it in an Adharmic manner.
3. All Sidhis come under Karma and Upasana phalam. So, they fall under Maya or Samsara.
4. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi points out if a person does not understand the limitation of Sidhis he will get distracted in spiritual pursuit. He will get attracted to Sidhis and Sidhas more than Gyanam. Sidhis cannot give one, Self- Knowledge. Bhagawan says don't value conventional Sidhis. He suggests ignoring them. We need to understand that the greatest Sidhi is Self-Knowledge. All conventional Sidhis will keep a person in Samsara. Self -Knowledge alone will take him out of Samsara.

In Sidhi, jealousy, quarrel etc., occur. All Sidhis will keep one in limitation or in Samsara. Remember, a Gyani is a true Sidha and Gyanam is the real Sidhi.

Explaining the shloka, Swamiji said, Atma Gyanam alone is a real miracle. Atma Gyanam will liberate you. All other Sidhis

do not matter. They are like a dream and are Mithya. Only Gyanam is required. All other Sidhis indicate ignorance. Shankaracharya's greatness is often cited more because of his Sidhi's than his knowledge. So too with Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi; People say he underwent surgery without any anesthesia. The greatness of Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi is that he encouraged Atma Vichara.

Dream appears real during the dream. Upon waking the dream disappears. So too with conventional Sidhis, every time one uses a Sidhi, it depletes ones Tapas.

With Self -Knowledge there is no depletion or decrease. Giving knowledge to others does not deplete one's Gyanam.

Patanjali's yogasutra considers Sidhis as obstacles to moksha. The word Atma Nishta means Atma Gyanam Nishta or non-forgetfulness of Atma Gyanam. Sahaj Samadhi means Atma Nishta. Such a person will not fall under the spell of Maya or ignorance.

idya (wealth) is the only thing that increases in a person by giving knowledge. So, the right attitude is not to respect Sidhis.

Shloka # 38:

In the state of thinking that the body is the Self, the contemplation of "He am I" is helpful to the search of the Supreme. In the accomplishment of the oneness of one's Self, that (He am I) contemplation is, again, without purpose, just as, to a man, the knowledge of hid manhood is of no help.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi warns Vedantic students not to enter Vedantic study mechanically. Original purpose of Vedanta is to be free one of all dependencies.

A student can get addicted to Vedantic study and it can become bondage. Such a student is likely to get upset if he sees any

obstacle to the study.

While initially the student has to bond with the Guru and be attached to Shastra and God, he should grow with knowledge and at some point drop all such attachments.

In the initial stages this Soham Vichara is essential and beneficial. This Vichara leads to Paramatma and Jivatma Aikyam. It is a means of acquiring knowledge. It is useful until one reaches the stage where one (Sadhaka) reaches the Sadhyam “Aham Brahma Asmi”. So long as you are a finite Jivatma requiring a transformation (struggling to become someone else, in mind), till then you are in the present “I” working towards a future “I”. Bhagwan says so long as this condition exists it is a misconception about your Self. Satisfaction is not connected with completion of any project. The moment you connect it to a project it becomes Samsara. Therefore, Vedantic study should not become another project. As long as you look at yourself as an ego (connecting to completion of a project) you have to study Vedanta. One has to keep checking if I am in an ego state or not. “I am satisfied” in spite of an incomplete project, this is Gyanam.

I never connect project to its completion. It is ego that converts everything into a project. This postponement of fulfillment is Samsara. Once you reach Gyanam drop the Vedanta Vichara. You can enjoy the classes as a non-binding desire.

Pramanam is irrelevant after Gyanam. A person need not perform the Japa “ I am human”. A fact is not meant for Japa. If I know “I am Brahman” and it is a fact for me, then I do not have to perform Mahavakya Japam anymore. Mahavakya needs to be understood and once you get the knowledge, you should drop it.

Therefore for a wise person (Gyani) “Aham Brahma Asmi” japa is not required.

Shloka # 39:

To say there is duality during the inquiry, but non-duality in the knowledge of the Supreme is not right. The tenth man's tenth-ness is one and same when he is lost before the search and when he is found later.

This is another important shloka. Moksha is not an external event occurring at Anatma level. Don't look for any transformation in the outside world. If you practice Yoga, you may acquire a glow in your body. This, however, has nothing to do with spirituality. Spirituality will not give you a halo. Gyanam has nothing to do with changing the world, body or sensory perceptions. The change occurs only in our intellect and in understanding that the World, God and "I" are one.

Take Away:

1. Gyanam has nothing to do with changing the world, body or sensory perceptions.
2. In Gyanam, the change occurs only in our intellect and in understanding that the World, God and "I" are one.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Foot Note:

Sidhi's:

Ten secondary siddhis

In the *Bhagavata Purana*, Krishna describes the ten secondary siddhis:

- *anūrmimatvam*: Being undisturbed by hunger, thirst, and other bodily appetites
- *dūraśravāṇa*: Hearing things far away
- *dūradarśanam*: Seeing things far away
- *manojavah*: Moving the body wherever thought goes (teleportation/astral projection)

- *kāmarūpam*: Assuming any form desired
- *parakāya praveśanam*: Entering the bodies of others
- *svachanda mr̥tyuh*: Dying when one desires
- *devānām saha krīdā anudarśanam*: Witnessing and participating in the pastimes of the gods
- *yathā saṅkalpa saṁsiddhiḥ*: Perfect accomplishment of one's determination
- *ājñāpratihatā gatiḥ*: Orders or commands being unimpeded^[1]

Bagawat Geeta, Chapter 4, Class 65

Greetings All,

Shloka # 30:

४.३० अनुवादानुसारी अनुवादानुसारी अनुवादानुसारी
अनुवादानुसारी अनुवादानुसारी ४.३०

Yet others, with strictly regulated diet, sacrifice vital breaths in vital breaths. All those are conversant with sacrifice, having destroyed their sins by acts of sacrifice.

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, Sri Krishna has talked about 12 disciplines (mental discipline, pranayama etc.,) including Gyanam as a Sadhana. First of all, these can be considered spiritual sadhanas only if God is involved in the process. Without God they are just exercises. Spiritual growth is only possible with Ishwara; hence the word Yagnaha is used. The second condition is that all are spiritual sadhana's only if their goal is spiritual

and not material. These exercises often can also help us with material gains. The word Yagnaha is used only if the practice is for spiritual purposes. Thus, the two factors, motive and god, have to be present to make them a spiritual sadhana.

Shloka # 30 discussed the discipline related to food as a Yagnaha. Upvasa (Upa-Vasa) means staying near God. To do so one has to avoid sensory objects on the day of Upavasa. The word Ahara does not only mean food, it also includes other sensory objects that we come in contact with such as hearing, speaking etc., or the Pancha Indriya's. In Chapter 6 Sri Krishna discusses quantity control of food while in chapter 17 he discusses its quality control. Both need to be controlled.

So, discipline with respect to Ahara means Pancha Prana are to be disciplined. This is also a Yagnaha. Undisciplined Pancha Prana is the sacrifice for disciplined Pancha Parana.

With this shloka, all 12 Yagnahas are complete. Sri Krishna does not say that all 12 sadhanas have to be practiced. He recommends some or some combination at least be practiced.

Citing the sacred thread ceremony or Yagno pavitham is one such Yagnaha. Man is born Animal-man. He then becomes a Man-man through his spiritual life. Later with knowledge he becomes God -Man. The twice born is a deliberate person. By practice of Yagnahas one destroys impurities obstructing knowledge. Hence all Yagnahas are glorious.

Shloka # 31:

They partake of the ambrosial remains of these sacrifices and repair to the eternal Brahman. The non-performer of sacrifices does not own (even) this world; why then, O best of Kuru princes! Speak of another?

Sri Krishna says if a person practices one or more of these Sadhanas it will be helpful. Food should be taken only after the sadhana.

Thus, Shastra says one must get up before sunrise. We must welcome the Sun God when he comes up. Before that one must take a bath and perform prayer. The daily bath itself is a ritual. It has two purposes. One is to purify the physical impurities and second to cleanse all inner impurities as well. All these have to be washed. Every transaction of ours brings with it impurities such as anger, stress etc. Thus, we have the Snana mantra called Aghamarshana mantram. It is addressed to Lord Varuna, the God of water. One should at least say a prayer(s) before taking a bath. Only after the bath and a prayer should one break one's fast. Many of us do not know what is hunger; because we have never given a chance to our body to tell us what is hunger; so therefore, we are supposed to break the fast, religiously after the yagnaha and the food I take is called yagnaha shishtam. My breakfast is called Yagna Shishtam; while, lunch is called Yagna Prasadam. The Yagnaha prasadam is also called Amrithum. Swamiji recommends trying this kind of disciplined life and see how it changes us. He says you will feel that the mind seems to be light.

These are the 12 Yagnahas. All eleven of them lead to the twelfth, Gyana Yagnaha. A religious life awakens the desire for philosophical knowledge. Such a person attains Brahman. He is known as a Yogi.

Sri Krishna cautions the people who do not practice some sadhana in their lives. Scriptures do not ask us to follow these disciplines for their benefit; rather they recommend them for our own wellbeing. For an undisciplined person even the worldly happiness will disappear. Due to his undisciplined life, his body and mind wear out making him incapable of enjoying even worldly pleasures. Sri Krishna asks how can such a person enjoy spiritual joy?

Shloka # 32:

४३२ अनेन विद्या विद्या विद्या विद्या विद्या
विद्या विद्या विद्या विद्या विद्या विद्या ४.३२ ॥

Thus have many sacrifices been spread out in the pages of the Veda. Know them all to be born of works. Knowing thus will you be liberated.

Here Sri Krishna says the 12 yagnahas he has described are only a sample of the many yagnahas prescribed in the Vedas. In Bhashyam, Shankaracharya describes many yagnahas and also provides reference to their source Veda. Other yagnahas include Pilgrimage, Japa etc. The word BrahmaMukham in this shloka means in Vedas. The reason there are so many Yagnahas is because there are many types of human personalities. Thus, there are Yagnahas related to physical, Vachika (oral) and manasika (mental) attributes. So, the many sadhanas have been created to suit different types of people. In general, yagnahas can be classified in two groups.

First one is Gyana Yagnaha.

Second group are Non-Gyana Yagnahas. These include Dravya Yagna or Karma Yagna. They also include sadhanas such as meditation.

What is the role of each one in life? Karma Yagnahas can only purify the mind. Thus, Japa, Ashtanga Yoga etc can only purify the mind. Only one or a combination of such Sadhanas need to be followed for Chitta Shiddhi.

After purifying the mind one has to come to Gyana Yagnaha. The multiple choices are available only for Karma Yagnahas and not for Gyana Yagnaha. Gyana Yagnaha is a singular sadhana that has to be followed to attain liberation.

Even Ashtanga Yoga's Nirvikalpa Samadhi cannot give us Gyanam.

Shloka # 33:

॥३३॥ ज्ञानयज्ञं विश्वामित्रं विश्वामित्रं ४.३३॥

The sacrifice of knowledge, 0 scourge of foes! Is superior to the sacrifices of materials. All works, without exception, Arjuna! culminate in knowledge.

Here Sri Krishna talks about the glory of Gyana Yagna. He says Dravya Yagna (Karma Yoga) is of lesser superiority than Gyana Yagna. Why so? Since all Karma Yagnas culminate or fructify only in Knowledge, they are useless if they do not take us to Gyanam. Karma Yagnam is incomplete without Gyana Yagnam. Vedas, however, do not prescribe a time line to reach Gyana Yagnam.

Karma Yagna is an indirect means while Gyana Yagna is the direct means of liberation. Gyana Yagna is also not possible without Karma Yagna. There is no short cut.

Another meaning of the shloka is that all Karma phalams are included in Gyana Phalam. Karma phalam is finite in nature as it is a result in time. Gyanam leads to knowledge of "Aham Brahma Asmi". It is knowledge of the infinite. Infinite cannot become finite. Finite, however, can be a part of infinite.

In chapter # 2 Sri Krishna gave an example of this. He asks who will ask for limited water from a pond when a huge lake is nearby.

Shloka # 34:

॥३४॥ विश्वामित्रं विश्वामित्रं विश्वामित्रं ४.३४॥

Know it by means of obeisance, exhaustive questionings, service to the (teacher). Knowers who have realized the truth impart to you that knowledge.

Here Sri Krishna says Gyana Yagna cannot be practiced independently. It needs external guidance. It needs:

- Shatram: that deals with the Self. My eyes can see the whole world but cannot see themselves. So we need a mirror. We need a special mirror, a verbal mirror, or a shastra-darpanam. I cannot operate it by myself. One can see one's Self only when this mirror is operated properly. For this a Guru is required.
- Guru

Best Practices: Practice of some sadhana every day is highly recommended for a seeker.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Chapter 4, Class 64

Greetings All,

Shloka # 27:

तदेव विद्युत्तमात्माना विद्युत्तमात्मा विद्युत्तमा
तदेव विद्युत्तमात्माना विद्युत्तमात्मा विद्युत्तमा 4.27

Yet others sacrifice all sense-activities and all activities of vital breaths in the fire of self-restraint, kindled by knowledge.

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, with the 24th shloka Sri Krishna concluded Gyana Yoga. In

shlokas 25 through 34 he now talks about the glory of Self Knowledge. In these shlokas he mentions twelve spiritual practices. One of them is also Gyana Yoga. He calls all of them Yagnahas. All of them involve worship of the Lord. He says all of them are great but Gyana yoga is the greatest of them all. All of them prepare the mind but only Gyana can give liberation.

Therefore all the eleven sadhanas are validated or made fruitful only when all of them culminate in Gyanam. Thus, Gyanam is called sakshat mokshakaranam and all

other sadhanas are called parampara mokshakaranam. They can only indirectly help; Gyanam alone can help directly.

For preparation purposes, we can take any one of the eleven, however, there is no choice with respect to Gyana Yoga. There are many paths for Chitta shuddhi but only one for Gyanam. Hence it is considered the greatest one of all. Following is the essence of Shlokas 25-34.

Shlokas 25-27:

1. **Gyana Yagna:** Self Knowledge is also a form of Yagna.
2. **Deva Yagna:** is the ritualistic worship of various devatha
3. **Vishaya Bhoga Yagna:** considers every experience as worship. Thus, the entire world consisting of shabda, sparsha, rupa, rasa and gandha are all taken as flowers. Thus music is considered a flower. A beautiful picture is a flower; a tasty object is a flower. All these flowers are offered to the Lord, who is inside us in the form of Atma Chaitanyam.
4. **Indriya Samyama Yagna:** This is sense control. Practice of maunam is such a Sadhana. One who masters the tongue not only controls speech he also controls his eating as well.
5. **Kshama Yagna:** It is thought discipline. Quantity,

quality and direction of thought have to be controlled. It is a tough discipline, because it requires monitoring the mind throughout the day.

Seven more Yagnas are covered in following shlokas.

Shloka # 28:

ॐ तत् त्वं तत् त्वं तत् त्वं तत् त्वं तत् त्वं तत् त्वं ४.२८

Other ascetics, subject to severe disciplines, sacrifice their material possessions, their penances, spiritual exercises, prescribed lessons, and knowledge.

In this Shloka five spiritual disciplines are discussed.

6. **Dravya Yagna:** It also means Dana Yagna. Danam can include: money, material, sharing knowledge, sharing time and sharing good will.

It is an important Yagna. In creation everything is in a flow. A river receives water and delivers to the ocean; Ocean delivers it to cloud and cloud delivers back to the river. Everything is cyclic. I too should receive as well as give. What I give should be proportionate to what I receive. If one does not follow this principle, the divide between rich and poor increases. Communism believes in forcible giving. Vedanta believes we should give out of our wisdom and share. Yagna, Dana and Tapaha are emphasized. Tapaha means moderation in everything. In olden days when one got more, one performed a big ritual and the Danam became a part of the ritual. This was done without any arrogance.

The scope and magnitude of dakshina danam can be understood when we consider the following: anna danam, vastra danam; chappal danam, kodai (umbrella) danam; vadi (stick) danam; pusthaka danam; kshetra (land) danam; svarna danam; and even kanyaka danam as a part of marriage ceremony.

7. **Tapaha:** Means the mastery of sense organs. It is willful Self-denial to establish my mastery over my own organs. Tapaha should not be enforced. Fasting is a spiritual practice while starving is not. Whatever I regularly use, I say, I will not use. Shiva rathri vrata, Upavasa are some examples. Saying no to coffee, to food, daily newspaper etc. are all examples of Tapaha. For some time, periodically, we should try to say no to all such things.

8. **Yoga Yagnaha:** This is Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali to integrate one's personality. We have five layers of personality and we have studied, annamaya, pranamaya, manomaya, vigyanamaya and anandamaya koshas.

Annamaya is disciplined by yogasanas; so that I can sit in a posture for an hour without disturbance. It is a yogah.

For pranamaya disciple, we have pranayama.

For manomaya disciple, we have meditation.

For vigyanamaya discipline, we have study.

All five koshas are supposed to work together. Like instruments in a music concert all koshas should work together in harmony to produce anandamaya or bliss in us.

9. **Svadhyaya Yagnaha:** is parayanam of the scriptures. It includes: learning to chant; memorizing and regularly chanting.

Learning to chant teaches akshara shuddhi. After that memorizing the chapter helps, as you can now understand the chapter holistically when the teacher teaches. Swamiji says he summarizes each chapter at the end. In ancient times this was not a practice as the student would be absorbing the whole chapter as he would have it in memory.

To help one memorize, scriptures were often in sutra or shloka

forms.

Sutras are very brief abbreviated capsule statement.

Shlokas are metrical or musical forms such as in Gita.

Both were meant for memorizing. Therefore, they never used a printed version of the book. Students had to memorize everything. The idea was while young, one memorized the shlokas. As one grew older the desire to know more about the shlokas arose and they were readily available in our minds. All scriptures are after all associated with Gods and Rishis.

10. Gyana Yagna: is study of the meaning of the scriptures.

It is enquiry and analysis. Therefore during Svadhyaya it is called shabda grahanam; Gyana yagna stage is called artha grahanam. In the first one, Svadhyaya, you learn the words, in the second one, Gyanam, you learn the meaning. And that is why they start the svadhyaya at an early age and they do the veda adhyayanam in the 5th year, 6th year, 7th year, etc. Since it is a young mind, it will easily register, and thus can cover the entire vedas within 15 years.

In shloka # 25 Deva and Gyana Yagna were mentioned. In shloka # 28 again Gyana Yagna is mentioned. The Gyana Yagna here means it is related to analysis of scriptures. So tarka, mimamsa and vyakarana, all these come under Gyana yajna. Five secondary disciplines of the Yagna are also mentioned. They are: Draya yagyaha, tapo yagyaha, yoga yagyaha, svadhyaya yagyaha, and Gyana yagyaha. In this shloka Dravya Yagyaha means Sadhakas who perform Dravya Yagya. Tapo Yagyaha means one who performs Tapas and so on. These sadhakas are also called Yathi or Yathayaha or Sanyasi. From this comes the name Yathiraja college. Yathi means a committed spiritual seeker. He may even be a Grihasta. They are people of firm resolve. Will power is very important in spirituality.

Shloka # 29:

Some intent on breath-control, blocking the movement of the in-breath and out-breath, sacrifice the in-breath in the out-breath and, similarly, sacrifice the out-breath in the in-breath.

11: Pranayama:

Here Sri Krishna discusses Pranayama as a useful spiritual discipline.

When we study the different layers of our personality, we find annamaya is the grossest layer, the physical body. The next interior layer is pranamaya, the energy sheath. Prana stands for the vital force, our energy. The next one is the manomaya, the mental personality; emotional or psychological personality.

Pranamaya comes in between annamaya and manomaya and if a person disciplines the pranic personality, then he will influence both annamaya as well as manomaya. When prana is disciplined, physical health will improve as will mental health.

Pranayama practice is of two types.

1. As an exercise to improve health or a secular discipline.
2. Vedas want to make it part of religious discipline.

Thus, we have the chant Om Bhoohu, Om Bhuvaha etc. This is garbha pranayamaha. It purifies the mind.

Pranyama is a very big discipline. There are advanced courses offering Pranayama for obtaining material success. Kundalini yoga is a part of this. Kundalini is Pranic energy. It is really about tapping into our potential energy in any form. Thus, walking daily is a manifestation of this power. Even

memory is a power that needs to be exercised. Power in a waterfall is the electricity and a manifestation of Kundalini Shakti.

These are all, however, manifestations of Anatma. Kundalini has no connection to Gyanam.

Vedanta is not interested in materialistic powers. From Vedanata's perspective, Pranayama can be used for Chitta Shuddi. There are three types of Pranayama. They are:

1. Puraka: Inhalation. Here exhalation is offered as the sacrifice.
2. Rachaka: Exhalation. Inhalation is offered as the sacrifice.
3. Kumbhaka: Neither inhale nor exhale. Antara Kumbhaka, retain after inhaling. Bahya Kumbhaka, is retaining after exhaling.

All these are Yagnahas. Kumbhakaha, where breath is stopped is good for a restless mind. It can, however, only give relative quietude. Only knowledge can bring absolute quietude.

Shloka # 30:

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Yet others, with strictly regulated diet, sacrifice vital breaths in vital breaths. All those are conversant with sacrifice, having destroyed their sins by acts of sacrifice.

12. Ahara Niyama:

So 11 yagnahas are over; now comes the 12th and last one. The last one is known as Ahara Niyama. It is discussed in chapter 6 again. Here one has to control quantity and quality of our intakes.

There should be a fixed time for eating. Over eating should be

avoided. One should get rid of Tamasic foods such as meat and alcohol. When food discipline is missing our pranas become thick and undisciplined.

Ahara niyama converts sick prana to healthy ones. Digestion and breathing are improved. They destroy all internal impurities.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy