Bagawat Geeta, Chapter 4, Class 64

Greetings All,

Shloka # 27:

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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:

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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 vratam, 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 praṇayama.

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:

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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. Kundaini 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 alchohol. 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

Saddharshanam, Class 19

Greetings All,

Shloka # 31:

Diving in silence by the mind, inquiring about one’s root

alone is true Self-inquiry. “This I am” and “This I not my nature” these thoughts are a limb of true inquiry.

Continuing his teaching, Swami Paramarthananda said, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi, after dealing with the nature of Ahamkara as a mythical entity, one created from borrowed attributes of Atma and Anatma, now points out that to achieve moksha Ahamkara has to be eliminated.

Ahmakara leads you to a false world. We have to eliminate this false world. We can eliminate it only by an enquiry into Atma. Enquiry into and discovery of Atma is the only solution. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi calls it Ahamkara Moola Vichara.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi did not give details of how to perform this Vicahra. For this we have to go Vedanta. Independent (ignorant) mind cannot perform this Self Enquiry. When an ignorant person asks the “Who am I?” it should be answered by a wise person. Therefore, mind (of the ignorant) comes up with its own misconceptions. It can reach silence but it cannot go beyond the silence. This requires an external support. Just as a microscope can help us see small objects and a telescope see far away objects, we need an external support that can lead us to this knowledge. Therefore, Shankaracharya says mind has to make the enquiry, but it has to be supported by:

- Shastra
- Acharya
- Upadesha and
- Application of our mind

Since this application is not mentioned in the Saddarshanam it has created a misconception among some people. They feel just asking the question “who am I?” will lead to Gyanam.

Discussing the third line of the shoka Swamiji says Vedanta Vichara is divided into three segments. They are:

1. Jivatma Vichara or Tvam Pada Vichara. This can also be compared to the truth of the wave in the water-ocean analogy.
2. Paramatma Vichara or Tatpada Vichara. This is Vichara at macrocosm level or on God. This has also been compared to the truth of the Ocean.
3. Focusing on the truth that nature of individual and of the total are one and the same. It is also known as Aikya Vichara or Adipada Vichara. Here one becomes aware of the incidental wave, the incidental ocean and the essential water. Essence of both Jivatma and Paramatma is the Atma. Jiva and Param are only incidental nama and roopa's, in reality there is only one Atma.

Eliminating the Pancha koshas where one sees every one of them as incidental attributes is performing the Tvampada Vichara. The body is incidental. It is like a worn out cloth that gets discarded after some time. Similarly, this body is also discarded after some time. This is known as Panchkosha viveka.

After negating all objects we come to a state of blankness. Here Guru and Shastra will point out that the blankness or silence is the objectless consciousness. This silence is my nature. I have to own up to it.

This silence cannot be objectified. A lot of Vedanta has been captured in line # 3 of this shloka. This knowledge of the essential nature of the individual is part of the Vichara. If a person performs only step # 1, Jivatma Vichara, he will conclude Atma is the essential nature. He will also conclude wrongly, that each person has an essential Atma or it leads to the conclusion of many Atma's. This is the theory of Sankhya philosophy. Therefore steps # 2 and # 3 are essential.

Shloka # 32:

Having reached within the heart, by the search, the "I" notion whose head is broken, falls. Then , another " I" which is the

main one shines forth. It is not ego, but it is Supreme fullness alone.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says by performing this Vichara successfully Ahamkara will be resolved. Dream is unreal while Waker is real. I wake upto "I" the Waker reality. Once I wake up, the dream will resolve into the waker. The source or the ground of this resolution is the Adhishtanam Atma. From ignorant (unknown) Atma Ahamkara rises and it resolves in the Known Atma. Citing another example, unknown rope resolves in known rope. This is the conversion of unknown rope to known rope. Similarly, unknown waker converts into known waker. Therefore the purpose of Vichara is to convert the unknown "I" to known "I". Through this Vichara Ahamkara falls and it is destroyed. There are many methods by which Ahamkara can be temporarily destroyed, but in all of them Ahamkara keeps coming back. Thus, in both yoga Samadhi (with vedantic knowledge) and andha Samadhi (without vedantic knowledge) extreme bliss can be experienced. However, once the Samadhi ends, Ahamkara rises again, since the ignorance has not yet gone. Vedanta says, Samadhi wont solve the problem. Even drugs can lead you to Samadhi experience. Swami Dayanada used to call them Bhang Sadhus. What is required is the knowledge that can falsify Ahamkara.

After this knowledge the Gyani will still use the word Aham, but here it means Swaroopa Atma and not Ahamkara. He realizes Aham Atma Asmi. **He realizes I am not the body rather I am the atma into which the whole world is born.**

Gyani looks at every galaxy as a bubble, which is born in him. He comes to the realization that "I am atma in all avasthas". The small "I" merges into the big "I". Atma is not a particular product. Consciousness is present in all worldly experiences. The glory of the new "I" is that it is free from Ahamkara. Ahamkara is limited, has a name and is a Samsari. The new "I" is not limited and has no name attached to it and it is Param Poornam. Even the word subject is not used anymore

for Atma. Initially Atma is called subject. Later you have to drop the subject as well. No word can describe it. It is complete without limitations. Poornam is not another adjective. It means absence of any attribute. Thus, it is like the word bald that means no hair. So, Atma is nirguna.

After gaining this knowledge, I am Atma, when we come to transactions, when you are asked where is your father; you have to use Ahamkara Vesham (disguise). This is required for decent Vyavahara. Always remember it is a Vesham. Remember I am not the Vesham. I am Atma.

Word meanings from above shlokas:

Charcha, Gaveshanam and Chayanam all mean Vichara. Etat means the five koshas.

Iti Prama: This knowledge of the essential nature. Ahanta: Ahamkara.

Hridantara: Adhishtana Atma.

Pari Bhugna: Falling head down.

Aham is used to mean Gyani not Ahamkara.

Anyat means the new I.

Prakrishtam: means the main.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Saddharshanam, Class 18

Greetings All,

Shloka # 29:

That is true Being, where the ego does not rise. That again will not perish without a search for its place of emergence. If that does not perish, can there be the Being in the form of oneness with one's self.

Continuing his teaching, Swami Paramarthananda said, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi talked about Ahamkara in Shloka's #23 through #25. In shloka # 26 he points out that Ahamkara is the basis of Samsara. It is finite and will end. He also points out that it is also a karta and a bhokta. Therefore moksha is possible only if Ahamkara is eliminated. So, we must a find a way to eliminate it. Shlokas 27-29 are describing the methods of elimination of Ahamkara. The methods include suppression, escapism and use of palliative. In sleep, Ahamkara is temporarily resolved. Sense pleasures take us to Ananada Maya Kosha. Music, food etc. belong to this Kosha. During such experiences too we go to a state of Nirvikalpa Avastha. Temporary forgetfulness occurs, one merges into the music and Ahamkara is resolved. In all experiences of pleasure Ahamkara is resolved. This is known as Ahamkara Laya. The yogic method of nirvikalpa samadhi is also an Ahamkara Laya. However, once you leave the pleasure, Ahamkara roars back. Nirvikalpa Samadhi, however, does remove Ahamkara permanently as such it also does not take you to moksha. Even after a maha-pralaya the old Ahamkara comes back. Only a permanent destruction of Ahamkara leads to moksha. Atma Agyanam is the root cause of Ahamkara. Atma Gyanam is the solution as it leads to understanding that Ahamkara is Mithya. It is like the destruction of a pot by a hammer or by throwing it down or through wisdom where one realizes that there is no such thing called pot and that only the clay exists. Realization dawns

that other than Atma nothing else exists. This destroys Ahamkara. I may use the pot functionally but I also am aware that it is really clay. Only understanding the Adishtanam can falsify the pot. This falsification is called Ahamkara Nasha. Once Agyanam is eliminated it does not comeback. A Jivan Mukta knows Ahamkara is mithya or rather that it is a vyavaharika Satyam.

In the shloka Aham means “The I” and not just I. Citing an example, a devotee asked a sage “when will I be immortal”? The sage replied, “when the I dies”.

Udayastan: means Atma Vichara.

Shlokas # 27-31 are all about Atma Vichara as a means of Ahamkara Nishta.

Shloka # 30:

As one dives in a well of deep waters, in the same way having controlled the breath and speech, with an extremely sharp intellect, having dived inside, inquiring, one gets to the root of one’s ego.

People ask if Self-enquiry is easy or difficult. Some say it is difficult. Others say Nama Smaranam is easier in kaliyuga. Some say Vichara is a straight and easy path. So is it difficult or easy? Katho Upanishad says it is difficult like walking on a razor’s edge. Sri Krishna says, however, it is very easy.

Swamiji says when the question asked is not right one, the answer also cannot be right. For whom is it easy or difficult? It depends on the person making the enquiry. For a prepared person it is easy. For an unprepared person it is not even appealing. For him Bhakti may be more appealing.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says first prepare and then enter the Vichara. Many people get into Vichara without preparation.

Sadhana Chatushtaya Sampathihi is required for such Vichara. All four qualifications are required. An integrated personality that can withdraw from Samsara should be in place. One should be mentally become a Sanyasi. You have to die to your role. This is called Indriya Nigraha or sensory withdrawal. In this state one should enquire. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi cites an example of the rope of a village well. Once it snaps a man has to go down deep into the well to bring it out. Like a well diver both qualities of Prana Nirodha (pranayama) and Vang Nirodha (control on mouth) are required. Fourth chapter of Gita also talks of Pranayama to make one's mind quiet. One also has to control the mouth, that is, eating and speaking. These two Sadhanas are indicated through the well driver analogy. After performing these two Sadhanas one should perform Atma Vichara. He says one should not go into Vichara without preparation. Even Patanjali talks of seven yogas to be practiced before Atma Vichara.

The Vicahra should be performed with a refined intellect. This involves Sravanam, mananam and nidhidhyasanam. Transcending and suppressing the intellect will not help. Only by refining intellect can one enquire. Through this enquiry one should know the mithya ahamkara's adishtanam or the Atma.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi does not discuss the process of Atma Vichara. He is silent on this topic. This has resulted in the creation of a cult who practice "Who am I" meditation.

In the Gita, Sri Krishna tells us how to perform the enquiry. He tells us one has to go to a qualified Guru. The traditional Guru will tell you to follow Sravanam, Mananam and Nidhidhyasanam. Sri Krishna is doing exactly that with Arjuna; he is teaching him.

Never take a prodigy as a model. Saints like Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi probably had their learning in a previous birth. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi has not mentioned or negated the Guru Shastra Upadesha. This is the difference between

tradition and cult.

Shloka # 31:

Diving in silence by the mind, inquiring about one's root alone is true Self inquiry. "This I am" and "This I not my nature" these thoughts are a limb of true inquiry.

Here again Atma Vichara is discussed. Here yet another Sadhana is also discussed. Mano-Nirodha or Kshama is discussed. Mauna is of two kinds. One Mauna is to be without speech. The other mauna is to be without the chatter of the mind. Mauna means fully focused on the words of the teacher. The word Majjam in shloka means immersed in. Citing Janaka Maharaja's story, Janaka and others were listening to the teacher, when a fire broke out. All others ran out except Janaka, who was focused on the words of the teacher. With such a silent mind one should enter a dialogue with the Guru on Atma Vichara or Ahamkara moola Vichara. This enquiry has two parts to it. They are:

- Seeing what I am not.
- Seeing what I am.

Picking every object and negating it by Neti or saying " I am not this or that".

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta Class 63, Chapter 4

Greetings All,

Shloka # 24:

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The means of the sacrificial offering is Brahman; Brahman is the oblation placed in the fire of Brahman and by Brahman is the sacrifice made. This scarificer, who concentrates on the act that is Brahman, reaches Brahman alone.

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, in Shlokas 18-24 Sri Krishna dealt with Gyana Yoga. In the 24th shloka he concluded Gyana Yoga. In the 24th shloka he was teaching the highest philosophy of the Upanishads. This Teaching can be summarized as follows:

1. Recognizing that the Consciousness principle is different from the body, mind and thought complex. This is similar to the electricity that while it illumines the bulb, is distinct and separate from it. Thus, Consciousness is a also separate entity. That is who I am. I am not the body-mind-thought complex. Body-mind-thought complex is only an incidental tool. In it's absence I stop transacting but continue to exist. "I" am existence and it does not require a body-mind-thought principle.
2. This "I" the Consciousness principle is behind all the bodies not just mine. There is only one Consciousness enclosed in many bodies. This Consciousness is same in everyone. From Consciousness' point of view we are all one.
3. This "I" behind all bodies is the essence and truth. The

body-mind-thought complex is not independent of Consciousness. Consciousness is Satyam.

Upanishads say Consciousness (Karana) is the cause and everything else is the effect (Maryam). Once I see that Consciousness is the cause and matter is the effect then I also become aware that there is no matter separate from Consciousness. This requires an attitudinal change in me.

This is similar to gold that is the cause of an ornament. There is only one gold while ornaments are many. Even in science while all elements are superficially different, they are all still energy. Vedanta says even the energies are different, only the Consciousness is one.

How can the invisible consciousness become the visible creation, if you ask, the science answers that the intangible and invisible energy can manifest as tangible matter. If that is possible for energy, Vedanta says, that the intangible formless consciousness alone is appearing as the tangible form-ful matter. And the one, who has this vision, sees the one truth behind all the superficial plurality; this is called Sarvatra svarna

darshanam. In the case of ornaments, bangles, chain, ring, etc. there is sarvatra ekasvarna darshanam; behind rivers and oceans and lakes, there is sarvatra eka jala

darshanam; behind all furnitures, there is sarvatra eka wood darshanam; similarly, behind the pluralistic universe Gyani has got ekathra atma darshanam. This is called Atma Ekatva Darshanam.

The man who sees this non-duality is called Brahma-Karma Samadhi Gyani. Samadhi here means being absorbed. Thus, gold samadhi means, gold is the essence in all ornaments. Not losing sight of Brahman in all transactions is Brahma Karma Samadhi.

Transactions are deliberately performed, like travelling, eating, buying etc. But during all this a part of the mind is absorbed in Brahman. Subconscious mind is aware of all Nishtas. Here Sri Krishna is talking of a Grihasta Gyani. One of the duties performed daily by a Grihatha in the past was Agni Hotra Yagya. Such an Agni Hotri Grihasta knew the Sarvam Brahmamayam Jagad. He knew there is only one Brahman and all others are forms and names only.

In shloka: Brahmarpanam means wooden spoon for offering.

Shloka # 25:

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Some Yogins offer sacrifices to deities; others sacrifice in the fire of Brahman by means of the sacrifice itself.

With previous shloka Gyanam topic is concluded. Now Sri Krishna praises Gyanam or Gyanam Stuthi. He praises Gyanam in a particular manner. Here he enumerated various Sadhanas. Scriptures offer many sadhanas. They include: Nama japa, dhyanam, yoga, pilgrimage and danam.

Every sadhana is called a yagnaḥa; thus we have japa yagnaḥa; dhyana yagnaha; upavasa yagnaḥa; yatra yagnaḥa; pranayama yagnaḥa; all these are called yagnaḥa. Why are they called yagnaha? Because in all these different sadhanas, the one common factor is God. All these yagnaḥas are dedicated to God, for superior growth. In all of them I pray: ◌□ mamopatta samasta duritakshayadvara Sri Parameshvara prityartham, that all my impurities must go away; and I must become spiritually pure. That inner purity is sought from God. So, since the God is involved; prayer is involved; spiritual purity is involved; all of them are called yagnaha. Even sweeping temple, sweeping your own home are all yagnaha’s, if you look upon the house as a temple. Therefore, what we require is only an attitudinal change, it makes everything a pooja,

It purifies the person spiritually; therefore all of them are called yagnahas.

Even eating is a Yagnam, hence the name Pranagni Hotra Yagnaha. Thus, from the grossest eating to the greatest yaga Sri Krishna calls them all Yagnaha. To this he also adds self-knowledge as a yagnaha. So even the study of scriptures come under yagnaha.

These are all Gyana Yagnahas. He then points out that Brahma Gyana Yagna is the highest of all of them. Why do we say so? It is not that other Yagnas are useless, but none of them lead to the Lord or Brahman. Any puja can only lead you to Gyanam. They are indirect means. Gyana Sadhana is the only direct means.

The oil, the wick, the lamp etc., don't remove darkness. Only the flame from the lamp will remove the darkness. Oil, wick, lamp are made meaningful by the flame. Gyana Yoga validates all other Sadhanas through Gyanam.

Suppose you say you don't like Gyanam, nothing wrong with it, continue with all other Sadhanas. Then, at some point in this life or other, you will be ready for Gyana Sadhana.

In the Shloka: Paramatma is fire (Brahmagni); Lower self is oblation. The lower, limited "I" should be resolved in the higher, unlimited "I". The wave resolves in the ocean. The wave is worried about its life and death. The wave family is worried too. Then the Guru wave comes and tells them to identify One's self with the water and not the waves. The moment the wave recognizes the truth it realizes that I am the water; I continue to exist in water vapor, in rainwater and in rivers. I am the immortal water. This is called offering of the wave-I, into the water-I.

The word Yagya in the shloka means Jiva-atma. It is the smaller, finite "I" or ego. It is offered into Pramatma "I". It is not a physical action. It is a change in understanding.

It is an intellectual change. This is Gyana Yagna and Jivaatma performs it.

Shloka # 25: Jivatma offers itself in fire of Paramatma. There are nine types of Bhakti or devotion. They are : Sravanam, Kirtanam, Visno padasevanam, Arcanam, Vandanam dasyam, Sakyam, Atma nivedanam etc. Of these the highest one is Atma-nivedanam. In all others ego is retained. In this Bhakti, ego itself is offered. Finally, offer the “I”(ego) to God. Once “I” (ego) don’t exist, what do I have left to offer?

Note: first line of shloka says everybody cannot perform this Gyana Yagnam. Therefore, others perform Daiva Yagnam. Here one invokes Gods.

Shloka # 26:

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Others sacrifice the senses, hearing, etc., in the fires of restraints; yet others sacrifice objects like sound in the fires of the senses.

Here two more Yagnas are enumerated.

First line of Shloka: Describes sensory discipline and sensory control. It is not suppression of senses. Suppression is as dangerous as indulgence. They have to be controlled through understanding. Suppression involves force. Here I myself decide to watch my senses. This is also a Yagna. A man, who performs sense control, is in a way he is making an offering of his undisciplined sense organs. This is also known as Dama Yagnaha.

Second line of Shloka: It describes Vishaya Bhoga Yagyaha. When I become a slave to sense organs, I say no to it. Citing example of coffee, currently I am slave to it. I should be able to say no to it at any time. Within my control, I enjoy

legitimate sense pleasures. This enjoyment is Yagyaha.

Here the oblation is forms, colors, sounds, taste etc. Homakunda’s are seven. They are: the two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, and one mouth. This Yagya is called Vishaya Bhoga Yagyaha. In this all our experiences such as Shabda, Sparsha, Roopa, Rasa and Gandha are all converted to Yagyaha. Every work, every word I utter all are offering to you. Here Lord is Consciousness. He is Me. So, Shabda offering becomes Shabda-gyanam and so with Sparsha Gyanam as well. etc.

Shloka # 27:

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

We have complete four Yagyas. This is the fifth one called Atma Samyama Yagyaha or mental discipline. Through this discipline the 10 organs, five of knowledge and five of action are controlled. The five organs of knowledge are: Shabda, Roopa, Rasa, Gandha, and Sparsha. While five organs of action are: vak, pani, pada, payu and upastha; the organs of speech, the hand, the leg, the organ of excretion and the organ of reproduction. These ten can be disciplined only by our mental discipline.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta Class 62, Chapter 4

Greetings All,

Shloka # 20:

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Giving up attachment to the fruits of works, eternally content, independent, the man, engaged in works as he is, does nothing at all.

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, in shlokas # 18-24 Sri Krishna is giving us the essence of Gita and the Upanishads or the Atma Swaroopa Gyanam. Once a person gets this knowledge, Karma, action and action-less, both do not shackle him. Both action and inaction don’t affect him. If this knowledge is not there (Agyani), when he is lacking any action, he starts thinking of work again. When an Agyani does not work he will want to work and vice versa. The problem is in our mind. Therefore, never try to change the external world or your action. Rather change your self.

Once a person gets this knowledge as Grihasta or Sanyasi, there will be freedom. It is the knowledge that gives the freedom.

A Grihasta Gyani is liberated in spite of an active life. Sanyasi is also liberated by his way of life.

Grihasta Gyani is liberated because of his Gyanam not due to his work. Work comes to him in waves, one after the other. He finds rest despite it all. He is a Nithyapatya. He is a

Nirashayaha. He does not depend on people. Even in action he is free. The popular saying, “ When shoe fits, you don’t feel its presence. You feel it when it does not fit” fits him perfectly. For Gyani Karma is not a hurdle.

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Free from expectations, controlling mind and self, renouncing all possessions, one who does an exclusive form of bodily work incurs no sin.

In this shloka Sri Krishna talks of a Sanyasi Gyani. This person is also free. He has renounced everything including relationships. Renunciation does not mean suppression. He does not lack anything. He has mastered the body-mind –thought complex. His body is made fit for this renunciation as well. He has to keep himself fit, as there is nobody to take care of him. In this shloka Atma means body. Since he does not have responsibilities he also does not have possessions.

In Grihastha ashrama the advantage is that one has security from children, money, wealth etc. The disadvantage is he has to take care of all of them.

In Sanyasa Ashrama the advantage is that there is no responsibility, no wife, no children and no property. The disadvantage is that there is no security. He is in the hands of God.

Both ashramas have positives and negatives. Sanyasa Ashrama is a civic death. He does not even vote. He has a body given by God. He has to take care of it as hard as possible till the very end. He has to accept whatever is given to him as food. However, since he has no ego, he also does not have Karmaphalam.

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Content with what is gained by chance, beyond dualities, rid of competitive spirit, equanimous in gain and loss, one is not bound in spite of working.

This shloka can be for both Grihastha Gyani as well as Sanyasi Gyani. Shankaracharya says it is for Sanyasi gyani. Swamiji says he will interpret it as for Grihasta Gyani.

He welcomes everything in life as a result of his actions. Events in our life are not totally controllable by us. My future is not in my total control. Some claim, " I can control my future". This is arrogance until one is hit by a misfortune. Even God cannot claim it. Other type is the fatalistic one who says I have no control over my future. This approach is also wrong. Gita says I am one of the important contributors to my future. I do have control to some extent. All other factors that control (war, weather, etc.) are called Daivam. The whole world is interconnected. All such external factors are called Daivam or Prarabdham. I prepare to do my best and accept whatever happens as Karma phalam.

If the karmaphalam is a failure, accept it. I still have to work for the future. Accept the present and work (hard) for the future. Worry cannot change the present; worry cannot change the future also. Worrying does not help.

Such a Gyani is one who is beyond the pairs of opposites. Life is facing a series of opposites. What does it mean? It means you cannot physically go beyond the pairs of opposites because, wherever you go, there will be pairs of opposite. Therefore, what is going beyond the pairs of opposites? It is nothing more than not allowing the pairs of opposites to disturb the mind. Making the pairs of opposites incapable of disturbing me too much.

You can strengthen yourself. The protection is Gyanam that will protect you from the pair of opposites. He is one who has gone beyond competition. Current thinking is that competition

brings the best in people. Shastra says competition is bad. One tends to compare with the winner. This leads to depression, jealousy and cheating. Love and cooperation is better than competition. Matsaryam (competition) is a very bad quality.

According to Vedanta, success is the ability to manage failure in life. If there were a method of succeeding all the time, Sri Krishna would have taught us that. He teaches us to work for success but be ready for both, success and failure. This is called Samaha. Such a person is very active and without shackles. All actions become leela for the Gyani. For an Agyani it is all a struggle.

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Whose attachment has vanished, who has been liberated, whose mind has been established in knowledge and who works as a sacrifice, all works are dissolved.

This shloka is also about Grihasta Gyani. Many people wonder if one has to take Sanyasa. Sri Krishna says physical renunciation is not required. Inner detachment is, however, a requirement.

Grihasta Gyani has given up his claims. Everything belongs to God. Everything I have is a gift of God. We should use it for inner growth. God can take anything at any time including my body. I am thankful for God’s gift. Everything around me belongs to God.

He is associated but not hooked to anyone or anything. With this approach he has freedom from tension and anxiety. Only then can one grow old gracefully. This is mukti. It is not a mysterious thing. It is freedom from worry, anxiety etc. He obtains it by detachment. Detachment comes from knowledge. His mind never loses sight of Atma Anatma Viveka. When body comes from the world and goes back to it, he is not attached to it.

He performs all actions as Ishwara Puja.

An Agyani expects results. He acts for Poornatvam. Gyani acts out of Poornatvam. His actions dissolve punyam and papam like a roasted seed. It is like a normal seed but it cannot germinate. Gyani’s karma does not produce punyam or papam.

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The means of sacrificial offering is Brahman; Brahman is the oblation placed in the fire of Brahman and Brahman makes the sacrifice. This sacrificer, who concentrates on the act that is Brahman, reaches Brahman alone.

With this shloka Sri Krishna concludes Gyanam topic. It is a deeply philosophic shloka. A big leap of Vedantic significance is now made here.

Until now he said Gyanam is Atma-Anatma Vichara. Everyone is a mixture of the two, that is Consciousness and Body-mind-thought principle.

Consciousness is all pervading, unlimited, survives after death of body, and surviving consciousness cannot interact without a body. This we learnt from Second chapter shlokas 12-25. This was also discussed in chapter four, shloka 18.

First step of vedantic knowledge is Chetana-Achetana vibhaga. After this knowledge, I must now claim Consciousness as myself. I must now say, “ I am” rather than “ I have”.

I must know I am not a part, product or property of the body. The body does not limit me. I will survive this body. This “ I “ cannot transact in the world as medium of transaction (body) is not there.

First stage: So, the first stage of vedanta

is seeing “I”-as-Consciousness, and body-mind-and-the-world as

matter. I am consciousness while

Body, mind-and-world is matter. Unfortunately, this knowledge is not complete. The knowledge that “ I am Atma” and everything else is “Anatma” is still Dvaitam.

Next Stage: The next stage of Vedanta is knowing that there is no matter other than consciousness; matter is a myth; matter is non-substantial; even though it appears as tangible solid substance; matter does not have a substantiality of its own. The substance is consciousness alone. Atma alone is the substance. Matter does not exist separate from consciousness. There is no material world separate from me, the observer.

How can I swallow this? Vedanta now gives an example. In dream you experience an external world that is so real that you have nightmares. It comes from within you, in you and resolves in you. On waking up you understand it was a dream.

So also in waking, it is another dream state. Vedanta says this world is also dream of another level. We have got two levels of dreams; one is called pratibhashika dream; another is called vyavaharika dream; and when we look at this from the body’s standpoint, it has got a reality. It is a prathibhashika and Vyvaharika dream. Vedanta says you are in a dream state even in waking state. Therefore Sri Krishna wants to say that everything is nothing but Atma; there is no anatma separate from atma. This is the essence of this shloka.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta Class 60 – Chapter 4

Greetings All,

Shloka # 15:

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Knowing thus was work done by ancient seekers after liberation. Therefore you too do only work, as was done by the ancients in bygone days.

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, Arjuna wanted to escape his Sva-dharma that is killing his own kith and kin. It was causing him great mental distress. And also it is said in the scriptures “By actions one is bound”. Whenever we take up any action there is a strain on our personality. Will we succeed or not is a question that bothers us. This causes anxiety. Also the result of action is not fully dependent on our efforts. Result depends on other factors some of which are not in our control. So, future is uncontrollable. Also, results may not be up to our expectation.

Arjuna is experiencing all this on the battlefield. He wants to escape his Karma. Sri Krishna, however, is teaching him not to escape karma. Maximum you can do is you can change the karma from one action to another action; and often you find that when you change

the field of action, it ends up like falling from the frying pan into the fire. While you can change the action you cannot

give up the action. Therefore Krishna wants to teach Arjuna how to be involved in action but not be affected by the action.

Sri Krishna says, only through Gyanam can one insulate his or her mind from the tyranny of action. Once insulated, the action will appear like a game, a leela. For a Gyani it becomes a sport while for an Agyani it is a major undertaking. This method of insulation is available to every being. The method is not a new one. Your own forefathers have used it. Why don’t you use it as well?

Shloka # 16:

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What is work? What is non-work? In respect of these questions the sages even are deluded. Therefore, I shall elucidate the nature of work, by knowing which you will be delivered from evil.

Sri Krishna presents Gyanam as armor. Once you say Gyanam, the question arises Gyanam about what? It is knowledge of the nature of Karma. Where does it arise? Who does it belong to? This enquiry is important, as we have taken it for granted. Once we thought everything went around the earth. Then science discovered that everything goes around the sun. Thus, when we take action we feel “I am” doing the action. Sri Krishna says “you” are not doing the action.

If you want to get out of stressful situations you need to know about the nature of Karma. It is a very subtle topic.

Even great philosophers are confused about what is action and what is inaction? He says I will deal with this topic now. It is not an academic discussion. It has practical value. By this knowledge you will be freed from all types of Ashudha’s (samsara) or negatives. Do you want to be a thermometer (one

that measures a situation) or a thermostat (one that controls a situation)?

An Agyani is enslaved by situations.

A Gyani is master of situations.

Shloka # 17:

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Indeed you ought to know about work; also you ought to know about bad work; and, besides, you ought to know about non-work. Profound is the course of work.

Sri Krishna says, not only I am going to teach about Karma, but also about its nature, also about wrong Karma (Vikarma) and also about Akarma (inaction).

I will discuss about action, inaction and wrong action. This knowledge you have to work to gain it.

This is an introduction to Gyanam as an insulating material.

Gathihi: in the shloka means, Swaroopam or nature of action.

Shloka # 18:

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Whoso beholds non-work in work and work in non- work is wise among men; he is integrated; he does all works.

From # 18-24, Sri Krishna deals with knowledge or solution to all problems. This shloka is the core of chapter #4. It is a very impotent shloka in the entire Gita. It condenses the teaching of all Upanishads. Hence Gita is also considered an Upanishad. Essence of Upanishad is Gyanam. It is discussed in chapter # 2 of Gita and now in Chapter # 4 as well. Shloka #

18 is very significant and a difficult one to understand. This shloka has language of contradictions.

The literal translation is as follows:

“Wise person sees action in in-action.

Wise person also sees in-action in action.”

The contradiction:

If you see a thing wrongly, can you be a wise person?

Shankaracharya has written a large commentary on this shloka. This shloka has also been called a knotty shloka of Gita. In chapter 2, shloka 2.69 is also a knotty shloka. These verses are called the knotty verses because when Vyasa wanted Mahaganapathy to become the scribe; Mahaganapathy put a condition that once I start writing, I cannot stop. Therefore, you have to continuously dictate and if you stop for some reason I will leave. Vyasa agreed to this condition of Ganapathy but he placed a condition on Ganapathy as well. He said when you take down my commentary you should know the meaning of it, as well.

Thus, Vyasa composed knotty verses intermittently, to gain some time and Ganapathy some time to grasp them. Such shlokas are called Grantha Grandhi.

As per Vedanta every individual’s personality consists of two parts:

1) Anatma: Consisting of the body, mind thought complex.

2) Atma: consisting of the Conscious principle that makes the body, mind and thought complex sentient. It can be compared to the electricity that makes the bulb illumine. This invisible principle is all pervading and independent and it continues even when the body is gone. There may be many bulbs but the electricity illumining them is one and the same. Similarly the

Atma blesses the body, mind and thought complex and thus makes it sentient.

Wise person also sees in-action in action.”

We discussed Atma and Anatma in chapter 2. While there is only Atma, Anatma’s are many. Atma is all pervading while Anatma is limited in nature.

The Atma being all pervading cannot perform any action. Action involves physical or mental movement. So also it is with space, which cannot perform any action. While air, water, and fire can move, space cannot. Therefore, the all-pervading Consciousness is action- less. Hence, it need not renounce Karma. Consciousness is ever free from Karma.

The Anatma (Ahamkara) can never be free from action. It is a material entity. Matter is in eternal motion. Even a standing wall is full of atoms that are in motion.

In the book “ Tao of Physics” the author describes Nataraja’s eternal Dance. How do you know that he is eternally dancing? If you look at his jata, it is always parallel to the ground; when will the jata be parallel to the ground, it is possible only under one condition; when it is fiercely moving; that is why it is Natarāja’s picture as vishwa roopa that is in eternal motion.

Thus, the smallest of atoms and the largest of galaxies are in motion.

Anatma’s motion can never stop. Even if you see it at rest, it is still in motion in a potential form. Karma cannot be given up in Anatma.

Therefore, focusing on Atma own up to the permanent state of its rest. This inaction is called Gyana Karma Sanyasa.

A wise person sees the permanent peace of Atma even though there is action in Anatma. He discovers peace even in Anatma.

So, discover peace amidst outer activity. Citing an example, even when the hand moves, the light illumining the hand is not moving. Similarly even when the body moves, the awareness does not move. Actors move but the screen does not move. Therefore, turn your attention to the screen.

“Wise person sees action in in-action.

Discussing the second part of the shloka, action in inaction, when Anatma is resting (sleep) it appears action-less although actions reside in it in potential form. Thus, in sleep, all actions are waiting in seed form. The wise person sees the potential action in the action less-ness of the body mind complex. It means it is explicitly active or potentially active. Atma is ever inactive.

When action overwhelms me we don’t know how to get out of it. We feel overwhelmed. It is like catching the tail of a tiger, after sometime you will tire while the tiger will not. You then look for a place without action or shantam or shivam. This place is my own shanta swaroopam. So a wise person knows how to dip into his own tranquility. Sri Krishna wants to give us a taste of this shantam. This is provided to us during sleep. At that time you don’t have a Karta personality. Deep sleep is absolute Ananda. This is Atma Swaroopam.

For Gyani, this atma ananda is available all the time. He is called a real Yogi or person of fulfillment.

Shlokas # 19-24 are commentaries on shloka # 18.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Saddarshanam, Class 15

Greetings All,

Shloka # 24:

The Supreme, having distributed light to the intellect, Himself shines hidden inside the intellect. Having turned the intellect inwards, here within the intellect, by uniting, the vision of the Lord takes place, not by any other method.

Continuing his teaching, Swami Paramarthananda said, in this shloka Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi is pointing out that the Atma alone lends consciousness to the mind. Thus, the mind with this borrowed consciousness appears as if it is Self-effulgent. This mind is then capable of illuminating the external world. It has to work to know the external world. It, however, does not have to work to know the Atma, as the Atma is self -evident. Therefore, Self- knowledge involves turning attention to the ever-experienced Consciousness and understanding the fact that the ever-experienced consciousness is limitless. Intellect is not required for understanding Self Consciousness.

The word Dhiye in the shloka means giving Consciousness to the mind.

This ever- experienced Consciousness is ever present behind the mind. So, how does Atma remain hidden? If Atma is ever experienced, how can it remain hidden? This is a contradiction, says Swamiji. Citing an example, it is like the movie screen. Without the movie screen the characters in the movie cannot be experienced. In life the screen is never noticed because of our preoccupation with the movie. Experiencing a thing is different from deliberately paying

attention to something. This also true with space to which we do not pay attention to. If asked, what is on my hand, most of us will mention the hair, the fingernail etc. We will never mention the light on the hand that allows us see the hand. Due to our extroverted-ness we are preoccupied with the movie and don't pay attention to the screen. The same phenomenon occurs with our mind. We are so busy with our thoughts that we don't pay attention to the Consciousness, which is silence. So the two steps towards Self-knowledge are:

1. To pay attention to the ever experienced Consciousness.
2. With the help of scriptures negate all limitations of Atma and become aware of its limitless nature.

So, turn your attention away from all inert things (Samsara, body, mind and thought) and turn your attention to the ever-experienced Consciousness that illumines (makes known) the thought. Just as during watching the movie, you are asked to pay attention to the screen, the process followed here is also similar. It is one of changing the attention of the intellect. This is not a new experience rather it is just new information that the screen is not affected by the events in the movie. Tragedies and comedies do not affect it. Similarly, I, the ever-experienced Consciousness, is not affected by the events going on in my life. Don't be carried away by the events happening to you. Intellect alone can reveal this to you.

Guptaha in shloka means not paid attention to.

Na Anya means no other darshanam.

Therefore, turn your attention within your mind and connect the Budhi to the ever-experienced Consciousness.

This alone is Ishwara Drishti. Conscious attention to Consciousness is this Drishti. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi does not consider all other Darshanam's real. He says they don't liberate you. Therefore, change your understanding of

yourself. Anatma Ishwara is only a Prathibhashika Ishwara or Vyavaharika Ishwara.

Shloka # 25:

The body does not say, “I am”. Nobody says, “I was not”, in deep sleep. Search with your intellect, the birthplace of that “I”, upon whose rise, everything rises!

Here Bhagwan Ramana Maharishi talks about the mysterious nature of the ego. Ego is a misconception born out of ignorance. On enquiry it will disappear. Discussing Ahamkara, Bhagwan Ramana Maharishi asks, who is saying, “I am”?

Body can’t say it and Atma can’t say it either. Anatma body is inert as such it cannot say, “ I am”. Atma cannot say, “I am” as it does not have a mouth. Saying involves an action, the motion of the mouth. Therefore Atma can’t say it. If so, who is saying it? It must be an entity different from Atma or Anatma. Unfortunately there is no other such entity. If so, then who is saying it? The answer is it must be an entity that is a mixture of Anatma and Atma. This is called Ahamkara. It is the one that says, “I am”. Citing example of a bowl of salad, one can say there is mango, there is orange, there is cucumber etc., but there is no substance called salad. Salad is only a verbal expression. Ahamkara is also a mysterious entity with only a verbal existence.

If body had sentiency, death will never happen. So, someone else is saying, “I am this body”. Nobody would say I was non-existent in sleep. We know “ I” exist in three states of existence. If sleep becomes our death (a state of death), we will never sleep. So, the real “I” exists in all three states. Does Atma say, “I am”? Atma also does not and cannot say that. If it said so, in Sushupthi, Atma does not say, “I am”. Therefore there is someone other than Atma and Deha, called Ahamkara that is asleep in sleep, but awake in waking state. It is the cause of “I am”. The Samsari “I” is neither

body nor Atma.

All transactions and limitations arise with Ahamkara. So, attack Ahamkara. So, find the source of Ahamkara (by enquiry) with the help of intellect. Swamiji says it is a misconception that one has to transcend the intellect. As per Bhagwan Ramana Maharishi you require intellect for Self-Knowledge. Intellect is, however, not required to experience the Atma. The Atma is ever experienced. Intellect is required to pay attention to the ever-experienced Consciousness.

Knowledge comes to us during Vedanta Sravanam. In meditation this does not happen. No new knowledge comes from meditation. For knowledge, one needs Guru Shastra Upadesa. This is the Vedantic parampara.

Shloka #26:

The body does not know. Of the Truth, there is no birth. In the middle of these two, another of the size of the body rises, which is of the names ego, knot, bondage, subtle mind, mind, the realm of becoming and the individual.

Bhagwan Ramana Maharishi continues on the mysterious Ahmakara. Ahamkara has some features of Atma as well as some features of Anatma. Upto Shloka # 27, he discusses Ahmakara.

The inert body can never say, I am. If it can say so, then it will become sentient and it wont die. Can Atma say “I am” the Conscious Being? Atma cannot undergo any modification. If it were to say, it would be “ I am the eternal Consciousness” because it is birth-less. Atma is not mortal.

So this entity has taken properties of body and Atma and is called Ahamkara. It is the one that says I am a mortal sentient being. So this third entity comes into being. It is of the size of the body. It is a localized Ahamkara. It is an imposter I or false I. It has several names. It is called the Knot, as it cannot be easily removed. It has been placed a

long time ago. Ahamkara cannot be removed easily.

In spite of Vedantic knowledge Ahamkara will be difficult to remove, hence it is called Granthi. Ahamkara is formed by joining of the two (Mortal + Consciousness). It is called a Knot or Granthi. A third name is bondage. So, Ahamkara is bondage or Vibhandi. Ahamkara is not freedom.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Foot Note:

1. Pāramārthika (paramartha, absolute), the absolute level, “which is absolutely real and into which both other reality levels can be resolved”.[web 5] This experience can’t be sublated by any other experience.[20]
2. Vyāvahārika (vyavahara), or samvriti-saya[17] (empirical or pragmatical), “our world of experience, the phenomenal world that we handle every day when we are awake”.[web 5] It is the level in which both *jiva* (living creatures or individual souls) and *Iswara* are true; here, the material world is also true.
3. Prāthibhāsika (pratibhasika, apparent reality, unreality), “reality based on imagination alone”.[web 5] It is the level in which appearances are actually false, like the illusion of a snake over a rope, or a dream.

It is at the level of the highest truth (*paramārtha*) that there is no origination.[7] Gaudapada states that, from the absolute standpoint, not even “non-dual” exists.[2]

Bagawat Geeta, Class 59, Chapter 4

Greetings All,

Shloka # 13:

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The fourfold class-system according to the divisions of Prakrti’s constituents and works, has been ordained by Me. Though I am its author, know Me to be the immutable non-agent.

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, Sri Krishna is talking about Varna Ashrama Dharma as described by him through the Vedas. According to Vedas, society is divided into four classes. Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. These four classes can also be seen from three other perspectives. They are: Jati (parentage), Karma (profession) and Guna (character) respectively.

When a Jati Brahmana becomes an elected MP, he has become a Kshatriya by Karma. He could even become a Vaishya if he spends a lot of time chasing after money. Thus, there are many permutations and combinations that are possible.

Are there any gradations among the three?

In Jati, all four are created equal.

In karma too all occupations are equally important for the peace and progress of society. The mantra Purushasuktham says all four are parts of God. The four parts are Face (Knowledge, Brahmana), Arm (Soldier, Kshatriya), Thighs and Knees (

Money, Vaishya) and legs (Movement or work, Shudra).

Every organ is important. You realize this only when an organ does not function. Thus, there is no difference between professions. Swamiji says India's caste problems exist because this equality in professions has been violated.

However, in Guna there is gradation. A Noble person is superior to others. He will not demand it but people will themselves respect him. All of us should strive to become Guna Brahmana. Guna Brahmana is superior to Guna Kshatriya, Guna Vaishya or Guna Shudra. This is because he is the one closest to knowledge. He is a Satva Guna Pradhana. Guna Kshatriya is a little away, as he still has to attain knowledge. Guna Vaishya is even further away as he is still selfish, although very active. Guna shudra is lowest. He has not even started selfish activity. He has a long way to go.

Puranic stories such as Nandanar are about a non-brahmin although he was a Guna Brahamana.

Jati: Do we have a choice regarding Jathi?

In Jati, there is no choice. We can't change our parentage. Moksha does not require Jati as a basis for it.

Guna: Do we have a choice regarding our Guna?

Can a Guna shudra become a Guna Brahmana? Here there is choice. Character change is possible. All sadhanas are to help us in this process. We are born Tamo Guna Pradhana. It is the intrinsic nature of our body to be lazy. In Tatva Bodha we learnt that body is made from Tamas Amsha.

So, we have to move from Tamas pradhana to Rajas Pradhana. Rituals (karmakanda) can help us in this process. And then, move from Rajas to Satva Guna. One should learn to be contemplative. Upasana kandam helps with this change. Thus, after I become a Guna Brahmana, one has to go to the Nirguna

state (Ishwara Aikyam) through Gyana Kanda.

Do we have a choice regarding Karma or occupation?

We do have a choice. We can choose our occupation based upon:

1. Jathi or hereditary profession
2. Guna: based upon inclination.

Both have advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages:

With jathi, there is no need to choose. One is already exposed to the atmosphere. Even a child listens to its mothers singing in its womb. Preparation takes place early, including food.

Disadvantages: If he does not like the profession he choses, life can be miserable. Even today, Jathi based jobs are quite common.

Guna:

Advantages: There is no strain in person. He looks forward to Monday. Doing what I enjoy is important to a healthy life.

Disadvantages: I can never get an early training. Inclination becomes evident later in life. I may not choose correctly.

Drona and Vishwamithra are examples where Jathi was dominant.

Shastra warns us; let not money be a basis for profession. If this happens arts and crafts may die.

This is the Varna Vyavastha per Vedas and as per God.

Sri Krishna says even though I have created the four-fold class of humanity; still I am active all the time. However, these actions do not bind me. So, Arjuna do not escape your Karma. You can, even performing your Karmas, enjoy peace. Even though I do all activity they don’t disturb me. I am not

affected.

Shloka # 14:

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Works do not taint me; I desire not their fruits. Whoso knows Me to be such, is not bound by works.

Sri Krishna says Karma and its phalam cannot disturb me. I am not concerned about the results of action. Lord will not do any injustice to me.

As per Vedas planning for result is different from worrying about the result. Planning makes me efficient in the present, while worrying about result will make me deficient in present.

How to know if I am planning or worrying? Planning is a deliberate action. Worrying is not deliberate rather it is only a mechanical reaction. We cannot deliberately worry. It just happens.

Once planned and implemented, don’t worry. I am not concerned about outcome of Mahabharata war. I have knowledge, which is the best remedy for all problems. My knowledge is my weapon. It is my Sudarshana chakra. You can also get this Chakra.

“ So, this is freedom in spite of responsibility. This is the greatest secret. Such a Gyani is not bound by Karma.

Shloka # 15:

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Knowing thus was work done by ancient seekers after liberation. Therefore you too do only work, as was done by the ancients in bygone days.

Sri Krishna says your forefathers knew this secret knowledge.

They did not run away from responsibility. They had inner peace despite external activity. Therefore Arjuna staying in Grihastashrama perform your Jathi based Karma just like your forefathers did.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 58 – Chapter 4

Shloka # 12:

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People in the world offer scarifices to gods, desiring the success of their works. For, in this human world, quick is the success born of works.

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, up to shloka # 12 Sri Krishna talked about Avatara's. He began the chapter by glorifying Vedas. Once Sri Krishna stopped, Arjuna raised a doubt. Answering him Sri Krishna explained how an Avatara happens. And thereafter Krishna said that even by this avathara gyanam one can get

Liberation although most of the people are not interested in

Ishvara gyanam, they are only interested in karmas which will produce material result; He said most people are not interested in moksha; rather most are interested in karma. To obtain moksha is not Bhagawan's decision, rather it is our decision to make. Most people are interested in material goals only. With this Avatara rahasyam is over.

Now Sri Krishna is entering Gyana-Karma-Sanyasa teaching. Arjuna is not interested in doing his duty as a Kshatriya on the battlefield. Rather, he wants to take sanyasa. Arjuna is afraid of Karma. Sri Krishna wants to take the fear of Karma from Arjuna. As long as a human is alive one has to perform Karma. We cannot live even a moment without action. The types of actions we perform may be different. You will always have one job or another. Sri Krishna says you cannot escape Karma. Only death can cease karma. Even the smallest of atoms is active as is the huge Sun. Both at micro and macrocosmic level there is constant action and it is inevitable. Now with Karma there are always side effects. Karma means responsibility, tension, and the end result may not be always the way we desired. Because of this there is also mental disturbance. Sri Krishna says we must accept Karma as a part of life but we also need to find solutions for the side effects. This is much like some of the drugs we take. I should remain in action without being disturbed. To accomplish this one method is adopting Karma Yoga. Here Sri Krishna also talks of Gyanam as another solution. With Gyanam one is not affected by action or its results. Citing example of the ooze coming out of a Jackfruit, Swamiji says this white ooze sticks to your hands. People apply oil in their hands so that the ooze does not stick. So also Gyanam is the oil that prevents Karma from sticking to us. And this is the topic of this chapter as well.

Sri Krishna says look at me and my life. I have gone through a lot including failures. In spite of my activities I remain untouched by action or results of my karma.

Sri Krishna as creator also had a lot of duties. He was a

creator, sustainer and destroyer. I also designed a way of life for human beings to lead and it is in a manual called the Vedas. It teaches a life of harmony for both the individual as well as society. Such a life style is the Varna Ashrama Plan. **It has Varna**, the four fold division of society. This division allows social harmony and growth in individual, community, nation and cosmos.

Ashrama, describes the four stages of life of an individual that is: Brahmacharya, Grihastashrama, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa ashrama.

In this shloka Sri Krishna talks of Varna Ashrama.

Swamiji described Ashrama as follows:

Brahmacharya: This is the life of a student. In this stage he learns about the human goals. One goal is a material goal of how to earn a living. The second goal is a spiritual goal for inner growth. One goal is outward facing while other is inward facing. A balance has to be stuck between outer and inner growth.

Grihastashrama: Life as a householder. This is the implementation stage of the learning from Brahmacharya. It is a Karma Pradhana life. Activities are extrovert in nature. Hinduism also supports material growth and is not just a religion of escapism, as some would have us believe. All desires are fulfilled in a legitimate manner. Background should be spiritual. His desires will gradually be refined. It is a stage full of activity. Pancha Maha Yagna is usually practiced in this stage to purify the mind. Pancha Maha Yagna was detailed in Chapter 3.

3) **Vanaprashta**: is a stage of turning the mind inward. This is an Upasana Pradhana Ashrama. Inside or outside his house he will turn inwards.

4) **Sanyasa Ashrama**: He takes Sanyasa either in the house or

leaving the house. Either way he will dissociate mentally. He will handover everybody’s responsibility to Ishwara. He is in a more detached state of mind. This is a Gyana Pradhana stage.

Through these four ashramas the individual has catered to Self and Society. This is like a tree that gives fruits for the benefit of others but also produces seeds to ensure its own propagation.

This is known as ashrama vyavastha.

Shloka # 13:

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The fourfold class-system according to the divisions of Prakrti’s constituents and works, has been ordained by Me. Though I am its author, know Me to be the immutable non-agent.

Varna Vyavastha:

Broadly there are four varnas. They are Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. While these are the four divisions there are three perspectives on how they are based.

The first basis is Character or Guna or Svabhava. Thus there is Guna Brahmana, Kshatriya etc.

Second is based upon profession or Karma. Thus we have Karma Brahmana, Karma Kshatriya etc.

The third is based upon birth or Janma or Jathi. Thus we have Jathi Brahmana, Jathi Kshatriya etc. Swamiji clarified that Jathi is not the same as caste.

Guna Perspective:

What character makes what?

Guna Brahmana is one in whom Satva dominates, or it is Satva

Pradhana. Rajas and then Tamas follow it. Satva pradhana represents tranquility and intellectual efficiency. It has been detailed in chapter # 14 of the Gita. Rajo Guna is a state of hyper activity. Tamo guna is a state without Satva or Rajas or during sleep. It suppresses inner and outer activity.

Swamiji classified them as follows:

SRT: Thus in Guna Brahmana it is Satva (S), followed by Rajas (R) and then Tamas (T).

RST: In Guna Kshatriya it is RST. Here one is active, but selflessly.

RTS: Rajo Guna dominant backed by Tamo Guna. He is also active but is very selfish. This is Guna Vaishya.

TRS: Tamo Guna pradhana. Most of his time is spent in sleeping. Unskilled, mechanical person. This is Guna Shudra.

Profession or Karma perspective:

1. Karma Brahmana: All intellectual work. Teaching, research, spiritual and non spiritual etc.
2. Karma Kshatriya: Maintenance of law and order, defense etc.
3. Karma Vaishya: Producing wealth, Industry, Trade and business.
4. Karma Shudra: All activities that help all three above. Unskilled work.

Thus karma Brahmana need not be a Guna Brahmana. A Karma Brahmana selling Gita books may be more a Karma Vaishya.

Jathi Perspective (by birth):

- Jathi Brahmana. He can also become a Karma Kshatriya.
- Jathi Kshatriya
- Jathi Vaishya

- Jathi Shudra

Thus there are many permutations and combinations of these Varnas.

From Jathi (birth) perspective all four Varnas are considered equal. Thus, birth does not provide any superiority. All jathi's should be equally respected.

From Karma Perspective as well all professions are equally important. None is superior. Purushasuktham shows the four parts of the body of God as representing the four Varnas.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Saddharshanam, Class 12

As far as dehathma bava (experience of limitation caused by physical body) is concerned it is same for gyani and agyani. This experience of limitation is common on jagrada avastas and swapna avasta. But in sushukthi avasta, there is absence of experience. There is no third experience in sushukthi as the expreince of limitlessness does not exist. The very word experience presupposes thrupidi (experience, the experiencing instrument and the experienced object). The moment thripudi comes, there is limitation. Experience of limitlessness is a contridction. In sushukthi what we have is not experience of limitation (because the experiencer himself is not there) but the absence of experience of limitation.

You cannot make a difference between gyani and agyani based on their experiences. Difference between gyani and agyani is not in experience but in gyanam or knowledge that I am the

consciousness that pervade the body and universe and as a result, I am poornatvam. Gyani also experiences but he attributes to the body and not to I the subject. This is a conclusion and not an experience. Knowledge need not change the experience. For example, the experience of sun going around the earth continues even after we gain the knowledge it is actually the earth that goes around the sun. Knowledge can falsify the experience, even after that the experience can continue. I am a limited body is a fact for agyani and it is a fiction for gyani. Therefore, don't expect experiential difference after the study of vedanta.

Verse 20

The world exists for the ignorance and the Wise Man. To the former the seen world alone is real. To the other, the one that has become substratum of the seen, the full, formless Truth shines.

As long as there is duality, there will be limitation. As long as there is limitation, there will be mortality. As long as there is mortality, there will be insecurity. As long as there is insecurity, there will be samsara.

If samsara must be negated, insecurity must go away.

If insecurity must be negated, limitation must go away.

If limitation must be negated, duality must go away.

If duality must be negated, object must go away.

The objective world must be negated for the negation of samsara. The I the subject alone will be there.

Negation of the world is not the negation of the experience of the world. It is only the negation of the reality that we have attributed to the world. Vedanta only changes my perceptive of the world. That perspective is that the world enjoys a reality which is lesser than my reality. The world

includes the external objects, our own body, our own mind. Objects plus body plus mind has lower order of reality. Pradhibathika Sathyam and vyavaharika Sathyam are many, but paramarthika Sathyam is one. Pradhibathika sathyam and vyavahariha sathyam will continue but I, the paramarthika sathyam will not be affected. World will be experienced by both gyani and agyani.

Perceived world is common to both gyani and agyani and experientially there is no difference, but the gyani knows that the perceived world is mithya and the agyani thinks it is real.

Verse 21

It is possible to talk of fate and self-effort for them who know not the source of the two. To them who know well the source of fate and effort, there is neither fate nor effort.

Experiential change is not required for liberation. Cognitive change is enough. Experiential change can’t give liberation because they are temporary. If liberation is based on knowledge. it will be permanent because knowledge is permanent.

I create my own fate with my own free will and efforts; free will alone control my destiny. The counter argument is free will controls your future, but current free will by your past free will. A debate between fate and effort will be inconclusive and therefore we should never enter into this debate. Both fate and effort are mithya for a gyani.