

Bagawat Geeta Class 66, Chapter 4

Greetings All,

Shloka # 34:

ज्ञानं प्राप्नुयान्मनुष्यः श्रद्धांश्रुत्वा गुरुम्
श्रद्धांश्रुत्वा गुरुम् श्रद्धांश्रुत्वा गुरुम् 4.34

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

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, in shlokas 26 to 33, Sri Krishna talked about the glory of knowledge. Now in shloka # 34 he wants to complete the topic with a description of how to acquire this knowledge. He says our normal instruments of perceptions are all extrovert and meant to reveal the exterior world. Knowledge of Self is not possible with these extroverted instruments.

Citing an example, he says one cannot see one's own eyes. To see one's own eyes one needs a mirror. So also to see one's Atma a special mirror is required. A regular mirror can only reflect the Sthula-Sharira or the gross body. It cannot reflect the Atma. For the Atma one needs the Shastra-darpanam. We also need to know how to use this darpanam. This darpanam must also be clean and free of dust or the image reflected will be dull.

This requires another assistant called the Guru. He teaches us how to use the mirror. He allays all our misunderstandings and helps remove dust like obstacles and clears the mirror.

One requires a Guru. Obtaining knowledge without Guru is an exception. There are many types of Gurus. One type is the one

who initiates by giving mantras. Another guru offers inspiration. All Gurus are useful and required. However, the Guru Sri Krishna talks about is the Gyana Guru. Sri Krishna did not give mantra Upadesha to Arjuna. He functioned as a teaching Guru. He systematically taught Vedanta. He did not say he was God. He did not ask for blind acceptance. He wanted Arjuna to listen to his teaching. Learning involves active listening. Teacher reconciles every statement. Chapter after chapter Arjuna asks questions. He does not accept Sri Krishna's teaching in blind faith. He challenges the contradictions in the teaching.

Citing example of the equation $e=mc^2$, Swamiji says, it is not meant for japa. Each item in it namely the E, the M, and the C all have to be understood in detail. This requires many years of learning. So also it is with Vedanta's equation "You are the ultimate reality". This is not a mantra Japam. One has to know it. Until you are convinced, the teaching is not complete. That is the reason that Sri Krishna went through each chapter until the end of chapter 18. Then Arjuna said, Oh Sri Krishna, my confusion is gone; I have now clearly understood your teaching. This is the Guru referred to here by Sri Krishna.

Describing such a Guru further, Sri Krishna says, such a Gyani, man of knowledge, must also have very good communication skills. In a shloka by poet Kalidasa from his treatise "Malvikgnamitra", the poet emphasizes that simply being a scholar is not sufficient. Imparting the knowledge to other seekers is more important and a scholar who does this is the scholar of highest order. Such a person is also called Stotriya Brahma Nishta Guru or a Gyani or a Tatva Darshi. Just as a doctor who smokes does not have moral authority to advise a smoker, a Guru must have the moral authority. A Tatva Darshi has the true knowledge and as such he can give knowledge. The method of communication used by such Guru's followed Sampradaya. Therefore, a Sampradaya Guru alone is considered

fit to give knowledge. Asampradaya Guru is not accepted as a teaching Guru.

The Shishya also has to be deserving of knowledge. Milk in the wrong vessel will split. The shishya has to be a patram. The Patram's requirements are:

1. Intense desire for knowledge or Jignasa.
2. Humility or accepting one's ignorance. It is also called Vinayaha.

An egocentric person cannot get knowledge. The shishya should express his humility by prostrating before the Guru. He should ask questions. He should perform service or Seva to the Guru. This service will remove his impurities.

Swamiji says it was common for a new shishya to spend some time performing only seva to the Guru. This gave both of them an opportunity to know each other, get acclimatized and build rapport. This was a requirement before starting the teaching. This was also a time of service. During this period both Guru and Shishya are judging each other. This period could even last up to a year. Dayananda Saraswathi in his ashram would ask students to submit their notes. He wanted to see if they understood his teaching or not. It is in this manner a shishya became a patram.

Shloka # 35:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ 1.35

By grasping that knowledge, O Pandava prince! You will no longer be deluded as you are now; and through that, you will behold all beings in the Self and then in Me.

With Shloka # 34 the glorification and how to get Gyanam is over. Shlokas # 35- # 37 deal with Gyana phalam. Sri Krishna presents Gyana phalam as follows:

2. **Moha Nasha:** Arjuna surrendered to Sri Krishna due to his internal conflict in the battlefield. Arjuna was trained in Dharma Shastras. He was a man of knowledge. Yet, he is not able to resolve his internal conflict. He becomes indecisive. This conflict is caused by his attachment. He does not want to face the consequences of his action. He was not ready to accept the death of Bhishma and Drona. He also does not want to stay in the forest. This is Arjuna's dilemma. Our inability to face future because of our emotional attachments is the cause of conflict. Because of this we postpone our decisions. (Go to America or not? Marry or not? Etc.) . Some people go to an astrologer. Unfortunately two astrologers can never agree. This makes the decision even more difficult. The reality is that a decision has to be made. So, internal conflict is a big weakness. With Self-knowledge, I am ready to face any future. I know the outcome can go either way. Still I jump into it anyway. I am ready to face the consequences. Self - knowledge gives one the strength to face consequences. You will not get into internal conflicts anymore. Arjuna, decision-making is always difficult. Self Knowledge helps you and keeps you sane.
3. **Jivatma Paramatma Aikyam:** You will have Jivatma paramatma Aikya darshanam. How? Sri Krishna says, after this knowledge you will know the entire creation rests in God. He is like space, all- pervading. You will also know that the whole world is in "You". Therefore "You" are God. Just like the wave, it was told; you and the ocean are one and the same. Both are essentially water. Therefore, Water is the essence.

Ishwara is Chaitanya. You are Chaitanya. Everything is Chaitanyam.

Shloka # 36:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीकृष्णाय नमः ॥

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

Two Gyana phalams were mentioned in last shloka. Here Sri Krishna communicates the third benefit.

- 3. Sarva Papa Nashaha:** Self-knowledge destroys all your papams. Nothing else destroys papams. Destroying papams acquired through many janmas is very difficult through prayaschittams. Not only are there too many old Papams, we are also constantly acquiring new ones. Citing an example, Swamiji says, Shashtra's say by leaving a young wife a man gets papam for seven Janmas. Self-knowledge, however, destroys all past papams as well as future ones.

Even the worst sinner will cross over the ocean of papam. The Gyanam boat will help you cross over the ocean-of-sins.

Take Away: Our emotional attachments are the cause of internal conflicts. This makes us unable to face the future. This was also Arjuna's dilemma.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Chapter 4, Class 65

Greetings All,

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.

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:

॥ यज्ञादन्नामृतं ब्रह्म ॥ यज्ञो यज्ञं यज्ञो यज्ञं ॥
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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:

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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:

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The sacrifice of knowledge, O 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:

[illegible]

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

Saddarshanam, Class 21

Greetings All,

Shloka # 35:

“I am not myself” or “I know myself”... such expressions of man are a laughable matter. Is the Self two-fold, by the division of the Seer and the seen? In the knowledge of the oneness of one’s Self, indeed, there are no divisions.”

Continuing his teaching, Swami Paramarthananda said,

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi has been talking about Atma Gyanam as a means of falsifying Ahamkara. Here he points out the many misconceptions about Atma Gyanam. He says this aspect needs to be clarified. Atma Gyanam is not an event where the unknown Atma becomes known. There is no question of knowing an unknown Atma. If so, it will mean objectifying Atma. An event in time means objectification. Before it was unknown and later became known. This is not possible with respect to Atma. Atma happens to be of the nature of consciousness. Consciousness is not objectifiable. Who will objectify it? Matter cannot objectify it. Matter is inert. Can a second consciousness objectify the first one? This is also not possible as there is only one consciousness. One part of Consciousness also cannot objectify another part of it because Consciousness does not have parts.

Therefore, matter, second consciousness or part of consciousness, none of them can objectify Consciousness. Therefore objectifying or knowing it as an event is not

possible.

Experiencing also cannot be done. Knowing, experiencing etc., are all misconceptions. Such an event is not possible. Our Consolation is that one need not objectify it. Knowing is required only if there is ignorance regarding something. Nobody is ignorant of the Consciousness. Unlike an inert object, everyone knows “ I am a conscious being”. Therefore, where is the question of knowing it? It is not required. Atma Gyanam is not a conventional process of knowing. So, people who say they know or don't know are all joking.

Expanding on the shloka Swamji said, the expressions “ I don't know myself or I know myself” both are laughable statements, as they don't exist. They both objectify knowledge. Both knowledge and ignorance are not possible with respect to Self. Subject and Object cannot be the same. The eyes see but they cannot be the objects of seeing. Does Atma exist as the subject and Object? If it exists, as subject it cant be an object and if it exists as an object it cannot be the subject. It does not exist in a two fold manner. Atma gyanam is thus a logical contradiction. It cannot happen in time. Since Atma is only one, there is no subject object division possible. No Gyani can claim, “ I know Atma”. If this is the case then what is Self Knowledge? Who is an Atma Gyani? What is it?

First: There is no “knowing” of Atma. There is also no “ignorance of Atma” as well. I am a “conscious” being. Nobody needs to be taught this.

Then, what is the aim of Self Knowledge?

We have some notions regarding Atma. These notions are the objects of our knowledge. Atma itself is not the object of our knowledge.

Citing an example: I am a mortal; this is a concept of me. I am located here; this is yet another concept of the me. I am

so and so many years old; yet another concept of me. Scriptures deal with these conclusions of "me". Vedanta asks us to question these conclusions. It questions these notions of our mind. Vedanta is not a study of Atma rather it is a study of attributes we have given to Atma. Atma Gyanam is about attributes I have attached to Atma. I concentrate on those attributes such as happy, angry, jealous, old, young etc. We are focusing on mortality, happiness and other such attributes rather than Atma.

After studying I conclude these attributes do not belong to me. All emotional problems that I attach to myself do not belong to me. All attributes are Mithya. They do not belong to me. Since they are Mithya, they cannot affect me at any time. Attributes do not belong to me. They don't taint me. Thus, Atma Gyanam is the knowledge about attributes that I attach to myself. Why call it Atma Gyanam and not Attribute Gyanam?

This is so because attributes were once attached to Atma and now have been taken away, hence it is called Atma Gyanam. It is a figurative statement. The reality is that we are studying attributes to see if they belong to me or not. Shankaracharya says Atma Gyanam is negating all attributes. I know myself very well. Vedanta helps remove all our attributes.

Shloka # 36:

Not having gained abidance in one's true nature, in the self-evident abode of Truth by reaching one's heart, loud talks mainly as to whether the Self is real or unreal, with form or without form, many or one, is all the play of Maya.

The approach of Vedanta is to eliminate attributes from the Self evident "I". If a person does not do this, then Vedanta study becomes just an academic exercise. Vedanta says all struggles in life change our attributes. Thus, the struggle to earn money is to change attribute from poor "I" to rich "I". Similarly when one gets married it converts the bachelor "I" to a married "I". It the same with children to become the

father "I". One who understands Vedanta will not try to change attributes. He will stop adding attributes. Otherwise Vedantic study becomes another part of Samsara. Even the struggle to change attributes is part of Samasara. So, do not convert Vedantic study to another form of attribute or Samsara.

One has to turn attention to mind(Hrut), which is the locus of the Sat or Consciousness principle. **Consciousness is present in mind as presence or absence of thought.** I am conscious of both states. Blankness means, consciousness is aware of blankness. Consciousness is witness of this state. So, how do I turn to consciousness? Entertaining the thought that consciousness is Myself and turning attention to it. Witness consciousness is not an object but Myself. "I" am aware of presence or absence of thoughts. It is the entertainment of appropriate thoughts that all attributes:

- do not belong to me.
- do not taint me.
- are Mithya.

And I am that (the Self without attributes).

This thought is called Atma nishta.

Entertainment of this thought is called abidance. Abidance is a mental action. Entertaining appropriate thoughts one should come to this abidance.

Upalabhya in the shloka means abidance in one's real nature that is naturally evident. Vedanta tells us attributes are not me. It means it is to know that "I am" without attributes. This is known as abidance.

Anupalabhya means without getting this abidance. Scholarly discussions are a waste of time. Pravadaha means prattling. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi criticizes academic exchanges. He calls it the success of Maya. Maya can convert Vedanta into a Vedanta trip. It will discuss Sat, Asat, Saguna and Nirguna,

plurality and duality, Dvaita and Advaita etc. If these discussions do not lead to Nishta they are useless. Ask yourself, "Am I studying Vedanta to change myself? Have I changed my understanding of my self?" The same ideas were also discussed in shloka # 34.

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.

Here Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi removes another big misconception about Self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is associated with mysticism and wise people are known as mystics. Truth is that Self-knowledge is an understanding that takes place in the intellect through Guru Shatra Upadesham. Once you make "knowledge" to be a mystic, then people they think one has extraordinary Siddhi. These Siddhi belongs to the world of Anatma. We don't question the extraordinary powers. However, they don't have any connection to Atma Gyanam. Thus, we can see following kinds of people: No knowledge, no power; No knowledge with power; with knowledge and no power; with knowledge and with power. Knowledge means liberation with or without powers. Powers are Mithya.

Best Practices: Atma Gyanam is not study of Atma. Rather, Atma Gyanam is the knowledge about attributes that I attach to myself. Shankaracharya says Atma Gyanam is negating all attributes.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Saddarshanam, Class 20

Greetings All,

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.

Continuing his teaching, Swami Paramarthananda said, here Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi presents the result of Self Enquiry or Atma Vichara in a poetic language. Here displacement of Ahamkara by the higher “I” is discussed. After Self Enquiry, now, Atma has become the master. The higher “I” replaces the lower “I”. So, how does this feel displacement in practical terms? Does one see a new & shining Atma? What does one feel in practice? Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says the change is only in our understanding. Detachment of Ahamkara occurs only due to a change in our understanding. Originally, I thought, I was a mortal Jivatma and all transactions reflected this misunderstanding. **However, I am now the immortal Atma. This radically changes all my transactions as the motive behind them has changed.**

The second change is that removal of Ahmakara does not mean Ahamkara is totally destroyed or banished. It just means Ahamkara’s position has been scaled down. Master Ahamkara has been demoted to being just an instrument of transaction. The Swamy now is the higher “I”, Ahamkara has become only a means or medium for transaction. For a Gyani, a Jivan Mukta, the Ahamkara is only an incidental mithya medium. In a Videha Mukta, Ahamkara is completely dissolved.

For the Gyani, Mithya Ahamkara is required for all transactions. It is actually a “requirement” for performing transactions. Thus, even to say, “Aham Brahma Asmi” requires Ahamkara.

However, to be in Brahman, I do not require Ahamkara. Therefore, to say and teach Aham Brahma Asmi, I still need Mithya Ahamakara, knowing it is incidental.

Thus, Gyani uses Ahamkara. Ahamkara is not removed completely. It is a demoted version of the original. Gyani knows “I am the Atma behind it”.

Shloka # 33:

What is there that remains to be done for him who shines, having devoured ego? He knows nothing other than Self. Who is capable of conceiving his state of being?

Once this displacement takes place, the Gyani enjoys poornatvam. Gyani does not struggle any more to accomplish things in life. His mission in life is accomplished. Rest of his life is available to Lord to use him in anyway he wants. He is like a flute for Sri Krishna. The flute is empty inside with nine holes. A human being is also like a flute that once emptied of ego, God can play him and great music comes out. The same body flute when played by the ego emits Apasruti. Such a Gyani stands out in society. His face is without tension. This Gyani need not perform Dharma, Artha and Kama as they are all part of moksha. The infinite includes all finites. He is no more a karta or bhokta. He does not have any worldly duties to fulfill. In Indian society duty is a big burden on an individual. Vedanta says you can never complete your duties so long as you are a karta. If Gyani has duties, they are now transferred to mithya Ahamkara. It becomes part of a drama. He does not have sleepless nights for not fulfilling his duties. While he still performs, he does so in a relaxed manner. **This is the description of a Jivan Mukta.**

He does not perceive anything other than Atma. Everything he sees is Atma. What about Anatma? They are seen as non-substantial Nama and Roopas imposed over the Atma.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says I am struggling to describe a Gyani. To describe the state of mind of a Gyani is very difficult. Only way is to become one. So, become one says the Bhagawan.

Shloka # 34:

The Veda has said clearly, "That thou art". Even then, not having obtained abidance in the Supreme Self, to inquire again indicates the debility of the mind. That Reality indeed shines always as one's Self.

This is an important shloka. Here Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi gives an important clue to his thinking. He accepts Vedanta Vichara as Atma Vichara. Many believe Self Enquiry does not require Vedanta. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi clarifies here how to use Vedanta Vichara. It is an important means. Any means is a blessing if handled properly. If not, then there are two problems:

- The method may not give expected result.
- It can create a negative result.

Vedanta Vichara is a sacred instrument if used properly. If not, its results can't be good. **What is Vedanta Vichara? It is meant for securing emotional independence from everything secular and sacred.** Even dependence on God is dependence. Dependence by its very nature indicates Samsara. Vedanta also should not be an object of dependence. It should give independence from everything including Vedanta. I should use it to enlighten myself. If I forget this, then it becomes a means of enjoyment and entertainment. Vedanta is a means of revealing myself as a source of Joy. It itself is not a source of joy. If used as a source of joy, we become attached to Vedanta. It then becomes a source of dependence, causing

anger, anxiety and stress.

Vedas say “ You are the Brahman” the source of Joy and peace. Even a Guru does not want his Shishya to be dependent upon him. If one loses purpose of Vedanta Vichara then Vedanta Vichara becomes an addiction. Therefore, performing continuous enquiry mechanically, losing sight of original purpose, is an addiction and is due to immaturity of mind.

If you remember the goal and continue enquiry it is purposeful. It will give us final independence. Any addiction makes mind weaker including on Vedanta Vichara.

That Paramatma is always accessible as your own nature for peace and joy. It is your own nature. Vedanta just tells you “You” are the source of the joy.

Shloka # 35:

“I am not myself” or “I know myself”... such expressions of man are a laughable matter. Is the Self two-fold, by the division of the Seer and the seen? In the knowledge of the oneness of one’s Self, indeed, there are no divisions.”

Here, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi, talks of uniqueness of Atma Gyanam. It is distinct from all other knowledge. It also occurs in the intellect alone. Hence purification of mind is required. Body is not the locus of knowledge nor is Atma. Intellect alone is the locus of this knowledge. All knowledge requires an appropriate means to obtain it. In this, Self-knowledge is similar to other forms of knowledge. **The uniqueness of Self Knowledge lies in the fact that in this knowledge the Subject and the Object are one and the same.** I, the Self and I, the Object, are the knowledge. Logically, in any process, including the process of knowledge, subject and object can never be the same. It is a universal law that subject can never be the object. Citing examples of this, thus, the eyes can see everything but themselves; one can taste everything with the tongue but it cannot taste itself

etc. Then, how does this Self-knowledge occur?

Best Practices: Since we are all practicing Vedanta Vichara we should keep following concepts always in mind:

1. **What is Vedanta Vichara? It is meant for securing emotional independence from everything secular and sacred.**
2. **The uniqueness of Self Knowledge (Vedanta Vichara) lies in the fact that in this knowledge the Subject and the Object are one and the same.**
3. **This (Self Knowledge) radically changes all my transactions as the motive behind them has changed.**

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Foot Note: The **Jivanmukta** (one who is in Jivanmukti) has gained liberation while in the body, but in this case, the individual regains full awareness of the world, simultaneously with awareness of the “The god is within me and everyone, everything” state. According to Advaita, a liberated human being (jivanmukta) has realised Brahman as his or her own true self.

Videha mukti (Sanskrit, “liberation after death”) refers to the moksha, or “liberation attained by a person after death”. It is a concept found in Hinduism and Jainism in relation to ending the samsara (the cycle of rebirth), and the concept contrasts with Jivanmukti which refer to achieving “liberation while alive”.

Bagawat Geeta, Chapter 4, Class 64

Greetings All,

Shloka # 27:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ४.२७ ॥

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:

Other ascetics, subject to severe disciplines, sacrifice their material possessions, their penances, spiritual exercises, prescribed lessons, and knowledge. 4.28

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 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:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ 4.29 ॥

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 pranayama. It purifies the mind.

Pranayama 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 Vedanta's perspective, Pranayama can be used for Chitta Shuddhi. 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:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ 4.30 ॥

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

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:

- Shashtra
- 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 Shashtra 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,

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 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 Shashtra 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:

ब्रह्मसंन्यासो ब्रह्मसंन्यासो ब्रह्मसंन्यासो ब्रह्मसंन्यासो
ब्रह्मसंन्यासो ब्रह्मसंन्यासो ब्रह्मसंन्यासो ब्रह्मसंन्यासो 4.24

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:

ॐ नमो ब्रह्मणे गन्तव्यो ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म मया ज्ञतम् ॥
ब्रह्म ब्रह्मसमाधिना ब्रह्मसमाधिना ब्रह्मसमाधिना ॥4.25॥

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 yagnaḥ; thus we have japa yagnaḥ; dhyana yagnaḥ; upavasa yagnaḥ; yatra yagnaḥ; pranayama yagnaḥ; all these are called yagnaḥ. Why are they called yagnaḥ? Because in all these different sadhanas, the one common factor is God. All these yagnaḥs are dedicated to God, for superior growth. In all of them I pray: ॐ नमो ब्रह्मणे गन्तव्यो ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म मया ज्ञतम् 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 yagnaḥ. 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 Paramatma "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:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ 4.26 ॥

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:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ 4.27 ॥

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

Saddharshanam Class 17

Greetings All,

Shloka #27:

The ghost of the ego is born amidst forms, based on a group of forms, the eater of forms, who has given up and held forms, is by itself formless and runs away at the time of inquiry into itself.

Continuing his teaching, Swami Paramarthananda said, in this shloka Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi deals with the anatomy of Ahamkara. It is not an independent substance; rather it is a mixture of Atma's features and Anatma's features. If these features are given back to Atma and Anatma respectively, Ahamkara will disappear. When we introduce ourselves we say, "I am" so and so. The "I" indicates the Consciousness (Atma) and "am" indicates Existence. Both "I" and "am" are borrowed features from the Sat (existence) and Chit (Consciousness) of Atma. Having borrowed two features from Atma, other features following "I am", such as my biographical qualifications such as my age, are borrowed from Anatma. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi calls these features Rupani or qualifications. Many of them are borrowed from Annamaya, Pranamaya and Vignanamaya koshas. These features are all roopams or properties borrowed from Anatma.

Thus, features of both Atma and Anatma exist in Ahamkara. Of them, the Atma feature does not change. The "I am" or Sat Chit does not change. At all ages you say "I am" and it remains same. Atma's features do not cause the variety in Ahamkara. Variety is caused by Anatma features such, as I am old or young etc. They are borrowed from the four Koshas. So,

Ahamkara is born out of Anatma's features. Since Anatma's features are constantly changing Ahmakara also changes with it.

In sleep, Ahamkara does not exist. "I am " is nirvikara, while other features are vikara. So dismiss all those vikara attributes and reach Atma.

Ahamkara =features of Atma + features of Anatma.

Ahamkara does not have intrinsic features of its own. When these features are removed from both, there is no more Ahamkara left, it is a myth. Therefore, it is considered Virupaha (disfigured). It lives on borrowed life. Citing example of a Reflected face in a mirror, it is a third entity, which is other than the original face and the mirror. Upon enquiry we find that reflected face experienced by me, has some features of the original face and some of the mirror as well. When these features are removed there is no reflected face anymore. Even the motion of the reflected face is borrowed from the mirror. Even though it does not have its own existence it is still available for experience. Hence it is called Mithya or Maya.

Because it is a mythical and mysterious substance it can be destroyed only by enquiry. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi gave example of the man who attended marriages uninvited. The bride's side thought he belonged to the groom. Groom's side thought he belonged to the bride. He got away with it until someone enquired about him. Then he disappeared altogether. So also, upon enquiry, Ahamkara disappears.

Shloka # 28:

In the being of the ego, all this shines. In the dissolution of the ego, nothing at all shines. Therefore, all this is of the form of ego. The search for it is the way to all victory.

The mythical Ahamkara can be ignored if it does not make

problems. Our own shadow or reflection is also mythical. Unfortunately, Ahamkara is the cause of all problems in life. It is the Karta, Bhokta and has all Karmas including Prarabhdham. This Karta Bhokta status is because of Ahamakra.

As long as you are fighting prarabhdha karma, you are fighting it with your hands tied. You can't see it, but it can see you. It can punch you at any time. This is the lot of Ahamkara. There is only one way to uproot Ahamkara. Only Atma-Anatma Viveka can uproot it.

Citing an example, in the waking and dream state, Ahamkara is present and we have suffering. In sleep state there is no Ahamkara and there is no suffering. So, the "Wakeful sleep" state is the state of wisdom. In this state you are awake but Ahamkara does not appear. This wisdom is called "wakeful sleep".

So, Ahamkara prapancha is Mithya Jagat and Mithya Ishwara. So, don't struggle changing the world or the situation. It is like shifting load from one shoulder to another. You may get a respite but pain will come back. So, enquiry into Ahamkara is the only path for total victory. Punyam, Papam, Dharma, Artha, Kama are all only temporary solutions to Ahamkara.

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.

Here Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi tells us what is a temporary solution and what is a permanent solution to the Ahamkara dilemma.

Temporary Solution:

Here Ahamakara is suppressed or evaded. In sleep, Ahamkara is

dormant or evaded. Listening to music or admiring a work of art can also place Ahamkara in a dormant situation. All sense pleasures, moral or immoral, can suppress Ahamkara. Music and alcohol can suppress Ahamkara, placing it in Layaha state or state of dormancy. Even in Maha Pralaya, Ahamkara is dormant. It comes back to life at the next creation. So, death is also not a solution.

Permanent Solution: is Ahamkara nasha. Ahamkara should not rise again. This is possible only by removing the root of Ahamkara. The cause of Ahamkara is Ignorance. Ignorance of what? It is ignorance of Adishtana Atma. This can be accomplished by only one method. It is through Atmagyanam. This can only come through Atma vichara. Until this is performed Ahamkara may become dormant but it will continue to rise again.

Satya sthithi or Moksha is that state wherein Ahamkara can never raise its hood again. Ahamkara will never leave us permanently without enquiry.

Suppose a man does not want to destroy Ahamkara. After all, shatras impose detachment as an essential for this Vichara. But detachment is difficult to achieve. This is acceptable if you accept Prarabhdha Karma. Therefore, insure yourself with Gyanam against Ahamkara. Moksha is security. Therefore go to advaita nishta. Insure yourself when things are going well.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta Class 62, Chapter 4

Greetings All,

Shloka # 20:

फलं त्यक्त्वा कर्मजं कर्मणो भवति प्रमत्तः
कर्मणो भवति प्रमत्तः कर्मणो भवति प्रमत्तः 4.20

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.

संन्यासिनां श्लोकः ॥ संन्यासिनां श्लोकः ॥

संन्यासिनां श्लोकः ॥ संन्यासिनां श्लोकः ॥ 4.21

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.

संन्यासिनां श्लोकः ॥ संन्यासिनां श्लोकः ॥

संन्यासिनां श्लोकः ॥ संन्यासिनां श्लोकः ॥ 4.22

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 Grihastha 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. Shashtra 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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योगयोगयोगयोग योग योगयोग योगयोगयोगयोगयोगयोगयोग4.23

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.

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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