

# Bagawat Geeta, Class 41

Greetings All,

Shloka # 13:

“ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.१३ ॥”

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.१३ ॥”

Continuing his teaching and refreshing our memory of last class, Swami Paramarthananda says, Lord Krishna was looking at Karma Yoga from different angles. He says Karma yoga is a way of life.

The first angle was that of a commandment of lord. If a person does not follow it, he incurs Pratyavaya Papam.

The second angle was as a request to lead a life of harmony. I have given you a world that is in harmony. You should maintain harmony for the sake of other living beings. It is a form of gratitude to the Lord or Ishwara Yagya.

The third angle is not Agya or Yagya but as a spiritual Sadhana by which I purify my mind. I am not doing any favor to the Lord. I am favoring myself. The benefit described in shloka # 13 is that, one who looks at the consequences of worship of God as yagya prasada, for such a person, all papam's of inner personality goes away. The consequence of worship can be in the form of food that remains after a Yagya or even can be taken as Karma Phalam.

As per Vedas, anything that obstructs Self- Knowledge is considered a Papam. Even money is a Papam, if I am lost in it. On the other hand, poverty is considered good, if it leads one to spirituality.

What is primary obstruction to spirituality? As per Vedanta, it is Mohaha or delusion. It means seeing the external world

as the cause of happiness or unhappiness.

If a particular music is played, a teenager is very happy while his parents are unhappy. They don't like it at all. So, is the music the source of happiness or unhappiness? As long as you are finding fault with the world you are in delusion. This delusion has to go away. It is my attitude towards the world that causes sorrow or happiness. It is not a change in the world but a change in my attitude that is required. Knowledge alone changes my attitude. Once I search for knowledge it makes me a seeker.

Shankaracharya's Bhaja Govindam is called Moha Mudgara (Hammer to shatter illusion). Here he analyzes all causes of happiness and unhappiness. He discusses all aspects of delusion. Only Karma Yoga can remove delusion. What is required is knowledge, not changing of the world.

In shloka # 13, Sri Krishna criticizes those who are selfish, who cook only for themselves and don't share the food. Pancha Maha Yagya requires sharing my money or food with others. Every day when you cook rice keep some aside (raw rice) and donate it every month. Give to others, exhorts Swamiji. Such selfish people are eating concentrated papam. They are moving away from spiritual knowledge.

Shloka # 14:

“ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३ ॥ १४ ॥”

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३ ॥ १४ ॥”

In previous shloka Karma Yoga was shown as a purifier. We have seen Agya, Yagya, and Chitta Shodhakam as different versions of Karma Yoga. Now, Sri Krishna describes a fourth angle to Karma Yoga. Here Karma Yoga is presented as Dharma.

What is dharma? That which maintains the harmony of the creation is called Dharma. We are not isolated beings; we are all integrated and interconnected with other beings. Beings

include humans, animals, plants, rivers etc. As said before all beings, other than humans, are programmed to live in harmony. Only human beings have been given free will and budhi shakthi. Humans can destroy this world or create a heaven out of it. If earth is destroyed, it will be due to human beings alone. Even a tiger cannot do it, but humans can do it.

Arjuna, you may not believe in God or my commandment, even then you have to lead a life of Karma Yoga to maintain harmony of this creation. Science shows we are all interconnected. Sri Krishna says, everything that happens in creation is cyclical, indicating harmony. Thus, we have the Water cycle, Carbon dioxide cycle etc., all required for conservation of matter and energy. Sri Krishna then cites one such cycle as an example.

All living beings are born out of food. Food in turn comes out of rain. Rain comes from Yagya, also called adrishtam, the invisible favorable factor. Yagya can also be called Punyam or Apoorvam. How can Punyam produce rain? Punyam is nothing but cosmic balance or harmony. Only in balance does rain come. Rain is considered an acid test for ecological balance. When we cut trees, the balance is lost. How to maintain this balance? Sri Krishna says, one maintains this balance only by Karma Yoga. In Karma Yoga, by revering creation, by revering nature, balance is maintained. I should avoid disturbing the harmony. Some serve by doing, while others serve by non-interference. Don't interfere by polluting nature.

Vedas even tells us how to use a tank or river. One should pray to the river first. Then, enter the river. One should not pollute the river by urinating etc., in it. Do not spit. Respect the river, ocean, air and fire. A life of reverence will maintain the cosmic balance. Even if one person has this reverence, rains will come for him. This reverence is called Karma Yoga.

Therefore, food comes from rain, rain comes from harmony and harmony comes from Karma Yoga.



Vedas have come out of Aksharam or Ishwara.

Then, how come we say Rishi's gave us the Vedas? Rishi's have served as a medium to receive Vedic knowledge. Just as a TV is a receiver, so also Rishi's were receivers. To receive such knowledge one has to prepare our self by Tapas or Dhyanam. So, study Vedas and get its benefits.

Take away from this class:

Swamiji says, it is not a change in the world but a change in my attitude that is required.

This is a topic often discussed by Vedanta group. How can we impact the world? Vedanta says, rather than focusing on changing the world we should focus on changing our self or our attitude to the world.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

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## **Upadesa Saram, Class 6**

Greetings All,

Shloka 7 and 8.

Shloka # 7: "Constant , natural meditation like the steady flow of ghee or a stream of water is better than intermittent contemplation."

Shloka #8: "The meditation "I am that" regarded as more purifying than one based on dualistic thought."

Refreshing our memory of the last class Swami Paramathananda

said Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi is dealing with a variety of spiritual exercises in his teachings. He discussed three of them namely Kayika, Vachika and Manasa Karmani. Thus:

Kayika relates to performing Puja.

Vachika relates to performing Japa.

Manasa relates to Dhyanam or Upanam.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi classifies Dhyanam or Upanam into two types. They are:

- Bheda Upanam
- Abheda Upanam also known as Ahamgraha Upanam. Ahamgraha literally means "self-grasping," or "self-identification."

Bheda Upanam: Elaborating on this upana, Swamiji says, in this Upanam God is different from me. Upanam Upanya bheda exists. After Bheda Upanam one moves to Abheda Upanam. Here you visualize God as myself in Soham Bhava. There is nothing wrong in this Upanam as God can be invoked in any object. Even as God is invoked in a Saligramam, or a mound of Turmeric so also one can invoke God in himself, as well. This is Abheda Upanam. It is superior to Bheda Upanam.

Abheda Upanam: is the stepping-stone for Vedanta. Here, one has to know "I am God". Abheda Upanam is an ideal intermediary phase between Bheda Upanam and Vedanta. The transition from duality to Advaita is not easy. One should practice saying "I am Lord". Every time puja is performed, the priest in his mantras offers puja to himself as well. The priest reminds us that there is no difference between God and me. Abheda Upanam is superior to Bheda Upanam.

Shlokas 9 and 10:

Shloka # 9:

"The repose of being poised in one's true nature, devoid of thoughts, is the highest devotion. It comes from the strength

of meditation.”

Shloka # 10:

“Sinking of the mind in the heart, its source, is Action. Devotion, Union and Knowledge.”

The possible culmination of any meditation (Bheda or Abheda) is Samadhi. Samadhi means absorption in object of meditation. I forget myself as meditator. One does not know he is meditating. This is similar to when the Waker is so absorbed in the dream world that he forgets that he is the projector of the dream. The dream becomes real to him. This is due to a natural propensity of the mind to do so; that is absorption leading to forgetfulness. This is also called Nirvikalpa Samadhi. The difference between meditator and meditated is lost. Subject object difference is lost. Vidyaranya defines Samadhi as forgetting that I am the meditator.

The word Susthithi in shloka # 9 means getting lost in Soham Bhava. Here the absorption is total. All Bheda Bhavana is gone. Thoughts of all divisions are gone. In Gita Chapter 6, Sri Krishna compares this state to a flame that remains without a flicker. The mind remains in Abheda Vrithihi. In this state, the flow of advaitic thought excludes dvaitic thought. Swamiji cautioned that Advaita Gyanam is different from Abheda Upasana. So, how does this absorption come about? It comes from deliberate meditation (bhavana). Just repeating “Om Namaha Shivaya” will take us into this state of absorption. By regular practice it becomes spontaneous. The Samadhi is the greatest form of Bhakthi. Puja and Japa are all aspects of Bhakthi as well. Ramana Maharishi says Abheda Samadhi is the highest form of Bhakthi. I am absorbed in the Lord and he is in me. In this context Bhakthi is considered Samadhi.

Thus, so far, Ramana MahaRishi has spoken about four disciplines: They are Puja, Japa, Dhyanam, and Samadhi.

In the next shloka Ramana MahaRishi explains two more Sadhanas. They are Yoga and Gyanam.

Yoga: While Patanjali's yoga is referred to, the emphasis is on Pranayama as a spiritual discipline.

Gyanam: Here the term Bodha is used in shloka # 10 for Gyanam. It means Self-knowledge.

So the six disciplines now are: Puja, Japa, Dhyana, Samadhi, Yoga and Gyanam.

For all these disciplines there is only one goal. The goal is that the mind should abide in peace. This Shanthi-Sthithi is goal of all Sadhanas. Swamiji says, a question does come up, after practicing all these Sadhanas, how do I know if I am progressing spiritually? The acid test is obtaining mental poise or shanthi. Even when Prarabhdam brings different experiences, maintain calmness amidst the turmoil. This is progress. Otherwise, it is not spiritual progress. Do I enjoy general equanimity at all times? Manaha Swastaha (shloka 10) means freedom from stress and abiding in my heart. Mind should have peace.

Shloka # 10:

“Sinking of the mind in the heart, its source, is Action. Devotion, Union and Knowledge.”

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi has talked about six sadhanas. They are, Puja, Japa, dhyana, bhakthi ( Samadhi), Yoga (Pranayama), and Bodhaha (Self knowledge). He discusses both Pranayama and Self Knowledge later.

Jivan Mukti is peace of mind alone. Swamiji says five of the six Sadhanas provide only a temporary peace of mind. Thus, all of them, except Bodha or Gyanam, provide a temporary peace of mind. Only with Atma Gyanam can we get permanent peace of mind.

Shloka # 11:

“ the mind becomes a quiescent by regulation of breath, like a bird caught in a net. This is a means of mind control.”

In shlokas 11 and 12 respectively Ramana Maharishi deals with Yoga. Yoga has many steps. Ramana Maharishi however highlights Vayu-rodhanam or regulation of breath. There are several types of Pranayama. They include: Puraka, Rechaka and Kumbhaka. Ramana Maharishi says Pranayama will make the mind quiet. Even science accepts this today. During stress, a deep breath brings down the body's toxic chemicals. Pranayama is highly recommended for stress. Even Readers digest had an article on this topic. Pranyama regulates Prana and mind. The Pancha Koshas are interconnected. Is it biochemistry that changes emotions or is it the other way around? Clearly, psychosomatic diseases improve with Pranayama. When Prana is regulated Annamaya and Manomaya Kosha are improved as well.

Rodhana in shloka # 11 means regulate. Even a turbulent mind becomes quiet with deep breath. Pranayama is like a cage for a bird. Just as a cage arrests the movement of a bird so also Pranayama arrests movement of a mind. The term Jala-Pakshi Vada is used in the shloka to mean a net or a cage for a bird.

Shloka # 12:

“Minds and breaths, expressing themselves as Consciousness and Action, are only two branches of the same Primal Power.”

So, how does Prana control the mind? Answering, Prana and mind are like two branches of the same tree. When one branch is pulled the other branch also comes along. Citing another example, all four legs of a table are connected to a wooden plank. If you pull one leg of the table other three also follow. So also with Prana and Manas, both are connected to one Prakrithi. Prakrithi (Maya) is the cause of Prana (Rajo guna) and Manas (Sathva Guna).

Chitta Vayava in this shloka means mind and Prana. Chitta means Gyanam.

Shakyordvayi means two branches.

Shakthimulaka means Maya or Prakrithi or main trunk of the tree.

By controlling mind, Prana is also controlled. In a very emotional state the breath changes, it becomes shallow. If both can influence each other why should we regulate mind through Prana? Controlling the grosser Prana is easier than subtler mind. From gross one goes to the subtle. When Pranayama is not possible, only medicine can help. Drugs and liquor are all trying to control the gross and thus the mind.

Shloka # 13:

“Control of the mind is of two kinds, its lulling and its destruction. A lulled mind will rise again but not the one which is destroyed.”

Now Ramana MahaRishi enters the last Sadhana called Gyanam. Even yoga and pranayama can only make the mind quiet temporarily. After all one cannot practice Pranayama all the time. Pranayama is not the ultimate solution. It only manages the problematic mind. Only Gyanam will destroy the problematic mind. In this shloka, Mano-laya, means temporary lulling of mind. Manonasha is permanent destruction of problematic mind. Swamiji clarified destruction of problematic mind does not mean destruction of the mind itself.

Liquor, drugs and even Nirvikalpa Samadhi (where the mind disappears temporarily), are all considered Layam and they can tackle the Problematic mind temporarily. The only other method is permanent destruction of the “problematic mind”. This does not mean destruction of the mind itself. Mind is destroyed only in death. The “problematic mind” is however destroyed and replaced by a “compassionate” mind.

Laya gatham means the mind is temporarily lulled. The mind,

however, continues to be problematic. The problematic mind is converted by wisdom. One sees the mind as Mithya. Once one sees the mind as Mithya it is a destroyed mind. Giving example in Tamil where seeing a wooden elephant one gets frightened, until one gets close by and sees it is not a real elephant. He sees it as a Mithya.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

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## Bagawat Geeta, Class 39

Greetings All,

Shloka # 9:

कार्मण्यकर्मणो यदाकर्तव्यमप्यचिन्तयति ।  
संश्रितः कर्मणो यदाकर्तव्यमप्यचिन्तयति ।  
संश्रितः कर्मणो यदाकर्तव्यमप्यचिन्तयति । 3.9

“This world is bound by works other than those done as sacrifice, O son of Kunti. Free from attachment, do work as sacrifice.”

Recapping last week’s teachings Swami Paramarthananda said Sri Krishna discussed Karma yoga from different angles. Karma Yoga consists of two paths. The first is appropriate action and second is proper attitude.

Appropriate action: All Satvika karmani fall under appropriate action. In this, I contribute more to the world through performance of Pancha Maha Yagya’s or Proper Actions.

Proper Attitude:

- One should have Ishwara Arapana Budhi while performing proper actions.
- Consequences of actions are accepted without criticism

with Prasada Budhi.

Thus, Proper Action + Proper Attitude= Karma Yoga.

Following are Sri Krishna's commentary on Karma Yoga, looking at it from different angles.

First angle, it is a commandment of the Lord. Nobody can escape it. By Agya, if we do not follow Karma Yoga, we will get Pratyavaha Papam. If we do not perform Pancha Maha Yagya we will bring down our spirituality. Here Karma Yoga is presented as a threat and more for immature people. Citing an example, violating the law of the land results in police action. If people follow the law no police action is required. So, here too, if people do not follow Karma Yoga the punishment is imprisonment in Samsara.

Second angle presented by Sri Krishna was that Karma Yoga is not a commandment; rather it is presented as a worship or expression of gratitude or love to God. The first angle was one of fear from which comes the saying "a God fearing person". In the second angle one follows not out of fear but out of gratitude. The more you enjoy the harmony of universe, the more you express gratitude.

Astronaut John Glenn, when he saw the world from far out in space, said " one who appreciates the creation, he cannot but believe in God, and he cannot but pray to Lord." Our morning worship is an appreciation of the universe and expression of gratitude for it. Even the opening of a tap for taking a bath results in an expression of gratitude for the glory of water. If you perform Sandhya Vandanam also you worship water. When they look for life, they look for water in a planet. I don't take Oxygen for granted either. Intense appreciation of the environment through fire worship, worship of water, worship of earth, worship of space etc., are all a part of Vedic religion. I don't have to produce or pollute. If I can maintain harmony, it is great.

Convert your life as an offering to me, as a Yagya.

If an action is not worship, it will cause bondage. Worship will liberate. It is similar to the poison of a cobra. It can be a killer or a savior, depends upon how you handle it. Action by itself does not cause bondage or liberation. It is our attitude that matters.

Thus,

Action + Devotion= Liberating factor.

Action-Devotion=Binding factor.

Action + Devotion=Yagya, a liberator

Action – Devotion=Karma, a binder.

Therefore, Arjuna may you do all your actions as a worship of the Lord. Such action itself gives satisfaction.

That is why we use the expression: mamopatta-samastaduritaksaya-dvara sri-paramesvara-prityartham; It means: I am happy that I have done this as an offering to the Lord.

Swamiji says we are not supposed to expect appreciation. Shastra advises family members to appreciate the contribution of every member of family. Thus, a husband should appreciate his wife and she in turn should appreciate him as well. A teacher should not expect appreciation from his students. Rather, the students should appreciate the teacher. So, you have no rights. You only have duties. Our society is a duty based

Society. Dayananda Saraswathi said: “where duty is emphasized, humility will come. Where as, where right is emphasized, fight will come; court will come;

divorce will come; all these things will come. Swamy Dayananda Saraswathi also used to say: “When you do your duty, others get their rights”.

Shloka # 10:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.१० ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.१० ॥

“Bringing forth creatures together with sacrifice, the Lord of

creatures said of old: multiply by means of sacrifices; let it yield whatever work you seek.”

A life of sacrifice is prescribed by the vedas themselves for the harmony and progress of the society. Such a life of contribution; such a life of sacrifice; such a life of sharing called the Yagna way of life, is prescribed by the vedas themselves for our own benefit.

Swamiji says, the Vedas are for our own benefit. They are a like a manual. Just as a manufacturer’s manual let’s the customer know how to handle his product. It is meant for the user. The instruction on how to take a medicine, are on the bottle. He who created the world was one with an extraordinary intelligence. Bhagawan has created this world and with it a manual on how to live in this world accomplishing Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Without this manual we will not know how to live in this world. So, Bhagawan gave us the Vedas. They preach a life of Yagya and with it you will prosper.

It is said that Prajapathi, Lord Brahma, created all living beings. He also created the human beings. He then called the human beings alone and gave them the Vedas. Vedas were not given to animals, as they don’t have the free will to abuse. They follow dharma and harmony of creation. A forest is in harmony until humans enter it. It is the same with the ocean. They say there is a particular type of rodent species that once their population reaches a limit, some of the rodents will commit suicide as a way to limit the population. This is a way of sacrifice for the good of their society.

Therefore, God did not give Vedas to animals. For human beings it is a great blessing as well as a big curse. It depends on how we use it. Human beings can create their own heaven or hell.

A human being can lead an ideal life of giving and sharing,

based upon freewill. Therefore humans can get the greatest benefit of moksha; or they can create a hell for themselves as well.

With life of Yagya, may you prosper. Swamiji then discussed a life of competition versus cooperation. In competition one does not share knowledge. One turns selfish. In cooperation, there is growth. That is why, even in sports, when there is heavy competition, there is cheating; use of drugs; all prompted by a desire to win. As per Veda's competition is a disease called matsaryam. Among the six evils of kamah, krodhah, lobhah, mohah, madah and matsaryah, matsaryah alone is the evil of competition. Veda's says competition should be replaced by cooperation. I should be happy when the other person also thrives. In competition the worst instincts come out including qualities such as cheating.

Kamdhuk in the shloka means kamadhenu or one who fulfills all your desires. Swamiji says the human intellect is our Kamadhenu. We can accomplish anything with it. So, when we hear Vyasacharya could see the war, sitting in the palace, few people would have thought television was even possible. Now we have TV, internet, computers and many more.

All this (artha, kama, dharma )became possible due to applied human intelligence. Moksha also is possible with an intelligent way of living or by Karma Yoga. Vedas are not against material progress. If you are committed only to material progress without spiritual progress then you will not grow. We are a combination of Atma and Anatma. What is spiritual growth? It is the discovery that I am Atma, the substratum of everything. Materially you cannot expand beyond a certain limit, intellectually too one cannot expand beyond a certain limit. Spiritually, however, the possibility for growth is unlimited. And such a balanced pursuit of material well being (dharma-artha- kama) as well as self-knowledge is called Karma Yogaḥ.

Shloka # 11:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.११ ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.११ ॥

“By means of this sacrifice nourish the Devas; let the Devas nourish you. Mutually nourishing, may you win supreme good.”

Continuing his talk on Karma Yoga as Yagna, Sri Krishna says by following Karma Yoga Yagna, you are propitiating the gods of the creation; you are propitiating the devathas. Devathas are presiding over natural forces. Thus, Indira presides over rain and thunder and Varuna over the ocean. Nature is propitiated. Nature is not violated. In return Gods will bless us. Creation and we need not be inimical rather we should live in cooperation. While Science wants to conquer nature, Vedas want the world and I to live in harmony. So, propitiate Gods. Gods will bless you with rains.

In the language of the Shashtra's, every tree is like the body of the Lord and every river is compared to the blood vessels of the Lord. So, when you are polluting the river, you are polluting the blood of the Lord. When you are blocking the river, you are blocking the blood vessels of the Lord. So the ultimate message is respect nature; live in harmony with nature, live in ecological harmony; this is called Karma Yogaha.

Even Kalidasa in his composition mangalashtakam addresses nature. He addresses all the trees; offers prostrations to all the rivers; offers prostrations to all the plants; and says, I appreciate the role of everything and I take a vow that my life will be in harmony with nature

May you Propitiate Devathas. May you accomplish overall well being including dharma, artha, and kama. We have enough for everybody and nobody needs to starve, however, there is no proper distribution or sharing. People are obese in some countries. Overeating destroys you. There is enough for human need but not enough for human greed. Through Karma Yoga may

you attain all Purushartha's.

With Best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

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## Upadesa Saram, Class 5

Greetings All,

Shloka # 4: "Ritualistic worship, chanting and meditation are done with the body, voice and the mind; they excel each other in the ascending order."

Shloka # 5: "Worship of God in his eight fold form, understanding that He is so manifest, is proper worship of Him."

Recapping last class Swami Paramarthananda said Ramana Maharishi mentioned three types of Karmas that help inner growth. He broadly classified them as Kayika, Vachika and Manasa Karmani.

In shloka # 5 Kayika karma is defined as offering puja to God as it purifies a person. Two types of puja are mentioned.

First type of puja is a direct and formal puja performed in a room or in a temple following all rules of puja, as per shastras. This puja may also include Nithya Sandhya Vanadanam.

Second type of puja is indirect puja where everything I do, all my actions, is an offering to god, as a puja.

After that, in shloka # 6, Ramana MahaRishi describes Vachika Karmani or oral activities. They include Parayanam and Japam.

Parayanam:

The Parayanam can be Vedic or Non-Vedic. They can even be in any language such as Tamil, Malayalam etc. They all should, however, be glorifying God.

Japa:

Japa is taking God's name, one name and repeating it. Japa is a great and efficacious spiritual Sadhana. Sri Krishna says among Yagyas, Japa Yagya is best. For Japa Yagya an initiation is not a requirement. One can consider Bhagavan as one's Guru; choose an Ishta Devata and then chant. The mantra chanted must be one for an Ishta Devata. Ishta Devata is one towards whom you are naturally inclined. For an Ishta Devata, one can consider, the family deity or the village deity as well. Choose a Nama and with God's grace start chanting it. Chanting 108 times is considered ideal. More than that is allowed as well.

Formal Japa must be performed sitting down and in a quiet place. Mantra Japa is essential for nourishing spiritual body even as food nourishes the physical body and love, the emotional body. Once I choose the Nama and the place of worship, I should then sit in a proper posture and invoke the Ishta Devata deity. A photo or a figurine is helpful to mentally invoke an image of the deity. Then, one offers namsakara. If one knows a dhyana shloka praising the deity, this also helps with visualization. If a person has been initiated in several Devatas give importance to your Ishta Devata mantra. Do not discard the other initiated mantras. The other mantras need not be chanted 108 times. In general, the more you repeat a mantra, the greater its Shakti.

Before and after chanting a mantra such as "Om Namah Shivaya" for over 100,000 times over a period of say two months one should perform Purascharana. This mantra chanting is like depositing money in a bank, it is depositing spiritual power. You can draw on it whenever you need it. It may be helpful in a crisis. You can call upon the mantra and say, " With power

of this mantra let this crisis pass". Such a Japa helps in the material world as well. Thus, mantra Japa is useful for spiritual as well as material well-being. Every Japa has a meaning. It is useful to know its meaning. Most of them mean surrender to God. Thus, Namah Shivaya means I surrender to lord Shiva. It also means, I accept whatever happens, wherever it happens (family, workplace etc.) as will of God. This is known as Sharanagathi. I think of the meaning of the Japa and then start chanting. Initially it can be loud to set the pace and pitch and later one can convert it to Manasa Japa.

During Japa there is no need to think of the deity. The mind can only do one thing at a time, deliberately. So, one has to decide if one wishes to concentrate on deity, mantra or mantra meaning. Concentration on mantra and its meaning are two different things. We have to choose one of them. In Japa, importance is given to sound of the Japa. It is not Artha Pradhana rather it is Shabda Pradhana. That is the reason a mantra cannot be translated into another language. The letters (or word) are most important. The silence between letters of mantra is important. In mantra japa one should concentrate on sound of the shabda alone. The silence between words of mantra is also important. Mantra meditation is different from silence. In Japa, concentration is on sound of the shabda. Silence is an important Vedantic meditation. There is a meditation called Silent meditation. It falls under Nidhidhyasanam and can be performed after Vedantic study especially of Manduka Upanishad. In this meditation, one starts with the Nama and then focuses on the silence. From silence then one goes to Chaitanyam. In Mantra Japa there is no silence. One only focuses on the words or letters of the Japa. After performing the Japa one should perform namaskara. A Japa mala can also be used. Mantra Japa is very important in many religions including Christianity and Islam.

Shloka # 6:

"Uttering the sacred words, either in a loud or low tone is

preferable to chants in praise of the Supreme. Mental contemplation is superior to both.”

As per Ramana Maharishi, Japa Mantra can be performed in three modes. They are:

1. Uchha Japa: Loud chanting, all can hear.
2. Manda Japa: Whispering chant, only I can hear.
3. Manasa Japa: Purely mental, even I can't hear.

Manasa Japa is considered most efficacious. They say it is ten times more effective than Manda Japa. Manda Japa is ten times more effective than Uchha Japa.

Manasa Japa is a form of meditation as well hence it is also known as Japayagnam. So, if anyone wants to practice meditation the best method is to chant the Nama mentally. This is the best method to get started on meditation. Other forms of meditation require understanding of scriptures. With this Vachika Karmani portion of shloka # 4 is over.

Shlokas 7 and 8 respectively deal with Manasa Karmani. They contribute to one's spiritual growth. Ramana Maharishi calls it Chintanam. Any thought associated with Ishwara is Manasa karma. Even a flame can be thought of so long as it is associated with Ishwara as remover of darkness. One can meditate on nature such as on a river, a flower etc. Here God is considered the intelligence behind nature. Nature itself is Vishwa Roopam. Ishwara Chintanam can also include your children, considered a gift from god. Anything connected with God; thinking about it is Manasa Chintanam. Any activity associated with Saguna Ishwara is Manasa Chintanam. It is also called Upasana or mental spiritual activity. Puja is not Upasana as it a physical activity. Only mental activity qualifies as Upasana.

Shloka #7:

“ Constant, natural meditation like steady flow of ghee or a stream of water is better than intermittent contemplation.”

In this shloka following word meanings are important to note.

Sarala Chintanam: Flow of thought of God.

Viraltaha: Not obstructed by other worldly thoughts. The flow of divine thoughts is not obstructed by worldly thoughts.

Two examples of such meditation are provided in this shloka.

First is the analogy to flow of ghee. When it is poured, because of its thickness, it flows in one continuous flow (Dhara Pravaha).

Second is analogy of flow of a perennial river or stream.

In the first one, flow is artificially maintained by tilting (Aajya Dhara) and later it becomes a natural flow.

Swamiji says Ishwara Upasana is of two types.

1. Ishwara is different from me (Dvaita Upasanam). This is acceptable in beginning stages, however ultimately we need to know that there is no difference between Jivatma and Paramatma.
2. I imagine God as myself; it is a higher form of meditation. Even in SandhyaVandanam this is prescribed. It is Advaitam and is called Abheda Upanam.

After Vedanta studies I will know I am God, however, at this time, I imagine I am God.

Nyasa means I visualize the deity as myself. This is Abheda Upanam. This is superior to Bheda Upanam. It prepares you for "Aham Brahma Asmi".

Swamiji says, one's Dasa Bhava (dualistic) should go . I should know "I am Jagat Karanam" or the Swamy.

Shloka # 8:

"The meditation "I am that" is regarded as more purifying than one based upon dualistic thought."

This is describing Abheda Upasanam.

Here there is Abheda bhavana. Thinking Soham means I am Sakshat Ishwara. It is superior to Bheda or Dvaita Upanam. We must start from Dvaita and then move to Advaita.

(My note: Purascharana means preparatory rites, which is associated with mantra japas. Puras means first of all and ācaraṇa means undertaking, practicing and performing. Therefore puraścaraṇa means first preparatory rites. There are two types of puraścaraṇa rites. One is to make saṅkalpa to certain prescribed number of recitations followed by homa, tarpaṇa, mārjana and bhojana on a regular basis. The second one is to do mantra japa and complete certain rounds as prescribed mantra śāstra-s. Puraścaraṇa should be done only after obtaining specific permission from the Guru, who initiated the mantra. Guru should be worshiped before and after puraścaraṇa. It is important that Guru should be offered dakṣiṇa. If Guru is not available, dakṣiṇa should be offered to his wife or son.)

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

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## Bagawat Geeta, Class 38

Greetings All,

Lord Krishna talked about the importance of karma up to the 7th verse; and now from the 8th verse onwards, up to 20th verse, the Lord is dealing with the important topic of karma yoga. Hence the chapter's name as well. It is a very important chapter of the Gita. In last class I pointed out Karma Yoga has two components to it.

Karma + Yoga= Karma Yoga.

Here Karma is proper action and Yoga is proper attitude.

### **Proper Action (karma)**

Proper action is divided into three types of actions known as Satvic, Rajasic and Tamasic.

In **Satvic** actions there are more beneficiaries. I may also be benefited. It is Selfless action. I give more and take less. In a final accounting I should have given more and taken less. According to the material world, success is, when I can perform minimum action and get maximum money for it. As per Shastras it is the other way around. According to them I should do more and take less. This is what makes it Selfless.

**Rajasic** Karma is when the other beneficiaries are few. I am concerned about my immediate family and myself. In today's world people do not even care for their old parents anymore. All this makes it selfish.

**Tamasic** Karma is when I am benefitted and others are not. Others are actually harmed. It is harmful action.

Satvic Karma provides fast benefit. Rajasic provides slow benefit. Tamasic does not provide any benefit. Tamasic person actually falls down spiritually. He may amass wealth by cheating and other such means, spiritually, however, he will move away from the shastras.

So a Karma Yogi should increase Satvic Karmas, reduce Rajasic Karma and avoid Tamasic Karmas. Satvic Karmas are defined in Shashtra itself as Pancha Maha Yagya's. They **are Proper actions**. They are:

- Deva Yagya: My contribution to Devas.
- Pitra Yagya: My contribution to Forefathers.
- Bramha Yagya: My contribution to scriptures and Guru Parampara.

- Manushya Yagya: My contribution to human beings.
- Bhuta Yagya: My contribution to environment, animals, plants etc.

In Hinduism all plants and animals are worshipped. They are all part of Pancha Maha Yagya. One should lead such a life of contribution. This is proper action.

### **Proper Attitude (Yoga)**

The **second part is proper attitude**. Even the best action will not give benefit if I look down upon the action. (In Tamil :Kadane ne panren or I will do it like repaying a debt, reluctantly). Our attitude must be that every action must be an offering to God. It is called Ishwara Arpana Budhi. This applies to performance of Satvic as well as Rajasic Karmas. Even Rajasic karma performed humbly is uplifting. Thus, we have the saying Daridra narayan. I am not giving to that Daridra but to Daridra Narayan. Similarly we have the expression Nara seva is Narayana seva and Manava seva is Madhava seva.

Even food should be offered to God first and then taken. This is all done to bring about an attitudinal change called Bhavana. Even the mundane task of cleaning a desk, do it as an offering to God. Once I make it an offering to God, I will do it wholeheartedly because I will not do anything inferior for God. If you do it in this manner, you will do the task well and wholeheartedly, as a Karta.

Whatever I do will produce a consequence. Even if you are doing selfless service in society people will criticize. People will criticize even good work. Whatever be the consequences have a Prasada Budhi; take the good and the bad as a gift from God. This attitude is called Yoga.

With this proper attitude, when I perform every action as an offering to God, I will not worry if it is pleasant or unpleasant. All our actions may not be that pleasant. Swamiji

says we do perform unpleasant actions. If I have to take care of my old parent who is not that well, it is a duty. But it may not be pleasant, as it will involve money and inconvenience. Some such person may even pray for the speedy demise of that parent.

For many people going to office is an unpleasant task. Similarly, a housewife also has complaints. Cooking three times, year round, with no entertainment, she may want to dine out, while he may not want to. Arjuna too is faced with an unpleasant task of fighting his own Kith and Kin.

When every action is an offering to God, there is pleasantness in the work. One does not grumble about the work. A karma Yogi works with great enthusiasm. Chinmayananda used to say: "Keep smiling at all times".

**Prasada Budhi:** Whatever the fruits, I accept it with complete grace, without any complaints. Whenever I don't get the expected result we tend to think of God as unjust. Whatever God gives is a just result of Prarabdha Karma. We should keep in mind that results often come from previous lives as well. When a local cricket umpire gives his decision it is accepted without question. If so, why can't you accept the decision of the universal umpire? This includes the decision of death as well. Whatever God gives, accept it. **When I am not able to accept it, pray to God to give me the strength to be able to accept it.** Budhi in this shloka means attitude.

This attitude gives Samatvam or a balanced mind brought about by a Prasada Budhi.

What is the benefit of Karma Yoga? The main benefit is very fast spiritual progress. This will be evident in self-knowledge. I will easily grasp self-knowledge. It may even provide some material benefit as a bye-product.

**Shloka # 8:**



**sacrifice. O son of Kunti. Free from attachment, do work as sacrifice.”**

In previous shloka Sri Krishna said Karma Yoga has to be followed. New research shows fear must not be used with a child. It crimps the mind of the child. In USA a child cannot be beaten. Corporal punishment is considered very bad. It must be used very sparingly. Sri Krishna tells Arjuna, You need not take my commandment in previous shloka as Ishwara Agya (command). I used it for immature persons only. So, Karma Yoga should be converted to Ishwara Yagya or worship of the Lord.

From Ishwara Agya it becomes Ishwara Yagya. In this context the following saying comes to mind, “We have enough for man’s need but we do not have enough for man’s greed.”

So, Karma Yoga is for worship of the Lord. Normally a puja is performed in a short time. Sri Krishna says, you may perform the short puja in the beginning, but ultimately the real puja is to convert your very life into a puja. Let my very living become an offering to you.

Shankara says in Soundarya Lahiri: Oh! Mother, wherever I go, take it as pradakshanam. So also, whatever you are eating, make it an offering to God.

What is Karma Yoga? They say, “Work is worship”. I can do worship during puja at home. How can I worship in my office? In Hinduism the whole world is a manifestation of God. Everything is God. You can worship him anywhere.

When work is performed with this attitude our actions will not be binding. There will be no bondage. This worship will lead to liberation.

Why is work the cause of bondage? Our actions create tensions. We wonder whether it will work properly. It results in a state of constant anxiety. We worry if the child will get admission or not? Will I be able to go to America or not? Will I win

the contract or not. Every action results in stress.

That is the reason there are so many stress management programs offered today.

By the age of 40 many executives have psychosomatic diseases caused by stress. Some have high blood pressure, some have diabetes and some have high Cholesterol.

Although he has a high salary he cannot even enjoy good food. He cannot take salty food; he cannot eat sweets; he cannot eat sour things because of ulcer; and so on and on. What is the point of all this money if a man cannot enjoy the simple things of life, asks Swamiji.

He says, a man can work and enjoy his life under only one condition. By converting your life into worship and telling yourself that whatever comes is prasada. Only by leading a life of converting work to worship can we lead a stress free work life.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

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# Bagawat Geeta, Class 37

Greetings All,

Shloka # 6:

कर्मणो यो मत्प्रसादात्प्राप्तमोक्षमवाप्नुयान्  
सर्वकर्मणो भूयान्मोक्षमवाप्नुयान्  
कर्मणो यो मत्प्रसादात्प्राप्तमोक्षमवाप्नुयान्  
सर्वकर्मणो भूयान्मोक्षमवाप्नुयान्  
कर्मणो यो मत्प्रसादात्प्राप्तमोक्षमवाप्नुयान्  
सर्वकर्मणो भूयान्मोक्षमवाप्नुयान्

“ Controlling the organs of action, he who has his mind dwelling on their objects has a confounded mind; he is said to be a hypocrite.”

Continuing his teaching of the Gita, Swami Paramathananda recapped last week’s class. In this shloka Sri Krishna is clarifying Arjuna’s doubts about Gyana Yoga and Karma Yoga. He says there is no choice between the two. Everybody has to go through karma yoga first which is the only means of purifying the mind and thereafter everyone has to go through gyana yoga, which is the only means of liberation. Gyana yoga means a study of the scriptures under the guidance of a guru. Guru Shashtra Upadesha Sravanam is called Gyana yoga and everyone has to go through it.

Even though there is no choice between these two sadhanas, there is a choice in one’s lifestyle. The choice is between Grihastashrama and Sanyasashrama. While there is no choice between these two sadhanas, Sri Krishna says, there is a choice with regard to the lifestyle that a person chooses. However, there is no uniform answer to this as it depends upon the type of seeker. Sri Krishna, however, observes that Sanyasashrama is a more difficult one to follow. Sanyasa is not for a majority of the people; it suits only a small minority. It is better to continue in Grihastashrama throughout or after Grihastashrama take to Sanyasa. He recommends Grihastashrama to Arjuna as well. He tells him activity is safer than withdrawal.

Sri Krishna gave three reasons in support of Karma Yoga (or not withdrawing from life) in shlokas 4, 5 and 6 respectively. They are:

1. By avoiding Karma, one cannot get peace of mind. If I have no action, I may think I will have peace of mind, however, inaction does not give you peace of mind.
2. Total Inaction is impossible. Based upon one's Gunas, one will perform action. Try staying at an Ashram for a week.

Swamiji then told the story of a Sanyasi in a temple.

In a temple, there was a Sanyasi sitting; without doing anything and he got daily Prasadam from the temple. A new officer took over the administration. He wanted to bring about changes and improvements. He asked how many people got the Prasadam. He got a list of names and at the end of the list was named the "Quiet Swamiji." If he did not do anything, why should the Quiet Swamiji get prasadam, was his question? The people in the temple told the officer the Swamiji was a respected

person and he should at least talk to him. He asked the Quiet Swamiji why he should get Prasadam for doing nothing. The Quiet Swamiji told him: My doing nothing is very good for the society. He said sitting quiet was not very easy and requested the officer to try it at least for a week. The officer thought it would be very easy and agreed. Once he sat with the Quiet Swamiji for some time, he got restless. After a few hours of quiet time he became extremely restless and gave up. He told the Pujari to give the Quiet Swamiji a double quota of Prasadam daily. Giving up action is not easy. Our gunas and svabhava will pressurize us to act.

3) Not only will action not result in moksha but it can also become a risky proposition. When there are no goals or plans in mind, the mind does not have anything to do, especially since he does not have Gyanam. An idle mind is ideal for





exception occurs when a person has performed Karma Yoga in a previous life.

In this shloka Sri Krishna talks about what is Karma Yoga. In the two slokas, 47 and 48 of the 2nd chapter, Sri Krishna did summarize karma yoga. Now from shlokas 8 to 20 Sri Krishna is describing Karma Yoga. It should be noted that Sri Krishna's teachings are all based upon Vedas. He is presenting it in a more modern form. The content is still the same. In Vedas, in Karma Kanda, Ishavasa and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads, all talk about Karma Yoga. In general karma Yoga can be defined as:

Karma +Yoga=Karma Yoga

Karma here means proper action.

Yoga here means proper attitude towards the action and the result of the action, both respectively.

What is proper action? Actions are of three types. They are Satvic, Tamasic and Rajasic.

Satvic: action is one in which more numbers of people get the benefit. It can include me as well. Example would be a businessman who gets profits but shares it with society. This is also called Nishkama Karma or Self less service.

Rajasic: action is one where beneficiaries are minimum. It is primarily focused on my near family and me.

Tamasic: action is one that is harmful. I hurt others for my benefit. I do not consider others. In India, a blaring mike is often encountered where there is no consideration of the people around. Any action that disturbs is Tamasic.

Karma Yoga should be primarily Satvic and Nishkama Karma. Shastras prescribe some of these Nishkama Karmas. They are known as Pancha Maha Yagna's. Performing the Pancha Maha Yagna makes our spiritual progress very fast. They purify

one's mind. They reduce one's Raga, Dvesha, Kama and Krodha. The Pancha Maha Yagna's are:

1. Deva Puja: Life should consist of religious activity or worship. This may depend upon your Jathi, Varna etc. Sandhyavandanam, Rama Nama Japam all fall into this category. This is dedicating exclusive time for Devas. It is treating Devas as guests. It can also be called prayer time.
2. Pithru Puja: Worship of forefathers. Scriptures give great importance to this puja. Some time should be allocated for this. The ancestor worship can be as per family tradition.
3. Rishi or Brahma Yagna: This is the worship of scriptures. We have a glorious tradition. We have to do something to preserve it and propagate it. Daily Parayanam or study of scripture such as Ramayanam falls under this yagna. Our Gita class is a part of Brahma Yagna. We are also responsible for handing over these teachings to posterity. We should share it with children through daily study. There are ritualistic ways of performing Brahma Yagna as well. In this process we also remember the Rishi Parampara (all Rishi's) who have brought down to this day the knowledge of our scriptures for our benefit.
4. Manushya Yagna: All types of social services fall under this Yagna. Feeding the poor, giving time to orphanages, giving time to old age homes, schools, etc., all fall under this Yagna. Feeding hungry is the primary Manushya Yagna also called Anna Danam.
5. Bhoota Yagna: This is protection of the environment and all other beings such as animals, plants, the water, air and the earth. This is the reason our scriptures show the animals as Vahanas of Devas. The story of Shakunthala makes the message clearer. Shakuntala, when she had to leave the ashrama of Rishi Kanva, she takes leave of all people, the plants, and even the deer. One

particular deer was very dear to her. It pulled her dress, not allowing her to leave. Even the trees bowed their head down. Shakuntala had won the hearts of all by her service.

All these five mahayagnas are compulsory. One who leads such a life is a very blessed person.

Take away from this class:

Please consider incorporating Pancha Maha Yagna practices in your daily life. Swamiji says they will transform you spiritually.

With Best wishes,  
Ram Ramaswamy

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## **Upadesa Saram, Class 2**

Greetings All,

Continuing his teaching of Upadesha Saram, Swami Paramarthananda said, in the last class we discussed that this book contains the essence of Veda Shastram. Vedas are divided into two groups:

1. Veda Poorva- also called Karma Kanda is the step used for preparation of the mind.
2. Vedanta – also called Gyana Kanda is the step used to remove ignorance of the mind.

Karma Kanda is done in an intelligent manner in which one enjoys the worldly life and desires but also allows one to grow spiritually. In this stage fulfillment of worldly desires is primary while spiritual growth is secondary.

As one grows older in Karma Kanda, this process starts to reverse. Now, the desire for the material world diminishes and desire for spiritual progress increases. This is Gyana Yogyatha Prapthihi.

Gyana Yoga itself is for Gyana Prapthi. It allows us Jivatma and Paramatma Aikyam.

Upadesha Sara's shloka's 1-13 are related to Veda Poorva or Karma Yoga. Shloka's 14-30 are related to Gyana Prapthi.

Karma Yoga is our first focus. Upadesha Saram is a teaching of Lord Shiva to Poorvamimamsaka students. Therefore, it begins with negation of Poorvamimamsaka philosophy. Poorvamimamsaka's have certain misconceptions. Ramana MahaRishi removes those misconceptions. Poorvamimamsaka's believe in rituals and not Vedanta. They considered Vedanta a non-fertile desert portion of a country.

The first misconception of Poorvamimamsaka's is that there is no God. If asked who created the world, they say both (God and world) are Mithyas, they are not created. If God does not create Karma Phalam, who does? Or, who is the Karma Phala Datha? Their answer is that the Niyathi of Karma creates Karma Phalam. Citing examples, Gravity does not need a God it follows laws of gravity. If you light a fire under water, the water will boil, no God comes in, to do this. They feel, the laws of physics, the moral laws, the laws of rituals etc., govern all actions. There is no Karma Phala Datha. The Karma itself is the Phala Datha. This is their second misconception.

There are many rituals and there are special rituals. These special rituals, such as Avahanthi Homam, provide finite results such as blessing of a child, money etc. These are, however, Anithya Phalam.

There are also certain special rituals that produce Nithyaphalam. It is called the eternal heaven, Swarga. It is similar to Christianity and Islam's concept of heaven.

In this context Swamji cited Nachiketas who told Yama: Swarga is a fine place because you are not there. In this Swarga there is no disease or death.

Moksha is immortality. If Swarga provides it, why do we need Vedanta, is the question posed by Poorvamimasaka's. So, the third misconception of Poorvamimasaka's was that Karma is Moksha Janakam.

Shloka # 1:

" The results of action flow according to the law of the Creator. Is Karma , action, God? It is insentient."

No laws can give phalam. You require a judge. An intelligent principle decides the phalam as per law. Actions alone are not enough to consider, one has to take into account the motive as well. Citing example of the Palavan Bus driver who hits a man in order to save him from a major accident, one has to take into account the motive of the driver as well. Without a judge, a judgment cannot be given.

Law + Judge=Phalam

Law itself is Jadam. It does not discriminate. The intelligent principle is required to preside over the law. The judge has to be well versed in Jivan Rashi (Past, present, all Lokas etc.). The judge has to be omniscient. When Karma is relevant to a family all members of the family simultaneously exhaust their Karmas. The Phalam has to be versatile. Millions of such events occur in the world and have to be addressed simultaneously. This requires a super-intelligent principle.

The word Kartu means Creator. By using God as the Creator, creation has manifestation and un-manifestation. As per Vedas the Universe comes and goes. Modern science also says the universe was created. This requires a Creator.

A question can be asked, as to why can't the world be created

accidentally. Citing a story about Shakespeare, it seems there was an explosion at the printing press and all letters got thrown out. Later putting them together resulted in creation of Shakespeare's works.

Can accidentally even a shloka be written? How can we accept the concept of an accidental Creator? Creation requires a creator and the Vedas. Both originate from the Lord. Therefore first misconception of Poorvamimasaka's is negated.

Law is blind and it requires an intelligent interpreter. This God is the Creator of Karma Phalam. Every experience I go through is a Karma Phalam. It was produced by an action of my own. Therefore, I am responsible for my Karma Phalam.

Relationship of Cows, Parent- Child and a good friend are all required. They are all Karma Phalas. The Phalam comes from God's hands. Why can't law books regulate Karma? It requires an agent to regulate. Vedas are Jadam. They require an interpreter. Physical laws are also Jadam as are moral and other laws. So, Ishwara is the Karma Phala Datha. This is, obviously, not accepted by Poorvamimasaka's.

Here we are talking about Vyavaharika Saguna Ishwara who is different from Vyavahrika Saguna Jiva and Vyavahrika Saguna Jagat. This is based upon a Vyavharika Drishti. Here Jiva and Ishwara are different and as per Vedanta, Karma is also Vyavahrika.

In Paramarthika Drishti, Jiva and Ishwara are one. One should not confuse and mix up Vyavahrika and Paramarthika Drishti's.

Shloka # 2:

" The fruits of action are transient. Action causes one to fall into the ocean of further action. It obstructs the goal."

Karma does not produce results. Ishwara produces Karma Phalam per Karmic law. In this shloka Ramana MahaRishi negates the

second misconception of the Poorvamimasaka's. They claim that some Yagas produce Swarga Loka. Here Ramana Maharishi negates their idea and says, no Karma can produce eternal result as the Phalam is always Anithyam.

Now a question comes up. Poorvamimasaka's also believe in Vedapramanam. They ask, " If you believe in Vedas, they say Swarga is eternal. If so, why don't you accept our Nithya Karma Phalam?" Vedantin's counter this with the question " There are places in Vedas that say Swarga is not eternal or it is Anithyam." Which word of Vedas should we accept?

My Note: Vyavahrika and Paramarthika explained.

The scriptures speak about two different frames of references to understand the relationship between the Man, the world and the God. They are the Vyavaharika state and the Paramarthika State.

The Vyavaharika state refers to the Dual (Dwaita) state of reference. Most people understand the Universe from this plane. They perceive the duality of object and the subject. There is the world (Jagat) and there is Individual (Jiva) and the God (Ishwara) all separate. The Paramarthika state refers to the Absolute Non-dual (Advaita) state of reference, where only Brahman/Atman is. There is no difference between God or Individual or the world. The former is a temporary and relative state of existence whereas the latter is the absolute-permanent state of existence.

With Best Wishes,  
Ram Ramaswamy

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# Bagawat Geeta, Class 35

Shloka # 1:

Arjuna Said:

“O Krsna! If your view is that knowledge is superior to work, why do you bid me to undertake this fearful work of war?”

Starting the teaching of chapter 3 Swami Paramathanada said, this chapter begins with a question from Arjuna. Arjuna is confused about the teaching in chapter 2. In chapter 2, Sri Krishna, at different times, said: “wise people do not grieve in life”, “Wisdom alone is solution for all grief” and “Ignorance is cause of all sorrow and knowledge frees one from all sorrow”. At the end of chapter 2 Sri Krishna emphasizes Gyana Yoga in the Sthitha Pragyaha. Sri Krishna talked a lot about Gyanam and Gyani. At the end of the chapter 2 he says, a Gyani will not have delusion in life.

In chapter 1, Arjuna’s primary problems were diagnosed as sorrow and internal conflict. In chapter 2, Sri Krishna says Gyanam is the solution for all sorrows and internal conflicts. Gyanam can be obtained only from a Guru or a Gurukulam. In Chapter 2, in its middle, Sri Krishna talks a lot about Karma, while in beginning and end he talks of a lot about Gyanam. Here, he advised Arjuna to perform Karma. Arjuna’s question is, should I follow the path Gyana Yoga or the Karma Yoga? Arjuna is naturally inclined towards Karma. In this instance, however, he is looking for an escape. Normally, being a Kshatriya he is inclined to fight, however, in front of Bhishma, Drona and Other relatives he does not want to fight. Even as he wants to run away from the battlefield he also remembers Sri Krishna’s teaching that he should stand up and fight as it is Dharma. He now blames Sri Krishna rather than himself, saying you are confusing me. Having glorified Gyanam, O Krishna, you are asking me to perform the Karma of battle.

Sri Krishna has not confused Arjuna. His confusion is due to

his own improper understanding. Swamiji says it is not unusual that this question, if Karma Yoga is better than Gyana Yoga, often comes up. People even ask this about Bhakthi, Raja and Kundalini Yoga's as well. Karma Yoga should not be compared to Gyana Yoga. Comparison is possible only when there are options. Both Karma and Gyana are not optional. Both are equally important for a person. Karma yoga makes you fit for Gyana Yoga. Karma purifies your mind. Arjuna was asked to perform Karma to purify his mind and then gain knowledge. Unfortunately Arjuna has been taking in Sri Krishna's teaching through a filter. He basically wants to avoid Karma.

Sri Krishna, in his greatness, does not blame Arjuna for this confusion. He answers the question with great elation on the topic of Karma Yoga.

Swamiji clarified that in Sanskrit one word can have many meanings depending on its context. Thus, the word Budhi can mean: Object of knowledge, instrument of knowledge and Knowledge itself. In this shloka it means Knowledge itself.

Arjuna's question is after asking me to obtain knowledge you are now asking me to perform action knowing that the action cannot produce new knowledge. Karma cannot produce any new knowledge, that too when the action is unpleasant (terrible). In this instance it even involves blood. We know that certain actions are unpleasant and certain actions are pleasant. For Arjuna if it were a pleasant action, it would have been fine. But you are engaging me in bloody action that too one involved with killing. Even as he was seeing his dear Bhisma and dear Droṇa standing the thought of killing them was too revolting.

Shloka # 2:

Arjuna Said:

"By words that seem confused, You bewilder my intelligence, as it were. Therefore set forth one sure course by which I may attain the highest good."

Arjuna says: Sri Krishna, you are using confusing statements or at least to me it appears so. Looks like I have not grasped your teaching properly. Please clarify.

Swamiji says, Vedanta emphasizes thinking. Blind acceptance is not advocated. Thus Bramhasutra is a logical analysis of scriptures. The process of preaching is initial and superficial, while teaching is for long term and it brings value to you. Through teaching alone internal transformation occurs.

Shloka # 3:

Sri Krishna Said:

“O sinless one! Two kinds of disciplines in this world were set forth by Me in times of yore-for the Samkhyas the discipline of knowledge and for the Yogins, that of works.”

Swamiji says Swami Dayanada Saraswathi used to say: “Value is a value only when the value of the value is valued.” Teaching conveys value of the value. Preaching only conveys the value. Example of this would be answering why Karma Yoga should be performed before Gyana Yoga.

Here too Sri Krishna is teaching Arjuna; He is not telling him to go and fight rather he is teaching him why karma is important. Sri Krishna now explains why Karma Yoga is important. This third shloka is an important one and is the foundation of chapter 3.

Scriptures point out that Karma Yoga Sadhana and Gyana Yoga Sadhana are both compulsory. It is like washing hand before eating. You clean your hand and then eat.

Karma Yoga makes you Gyana Yogyatha Prapthihi. Gyana Yoga has always been presented in scriptures at the end, not the beginning or the middle. There are of course exceptions. Ninety-nine percent of people are not prepared for Gyanam. Ramana Maharishi was an exception. What worked for Ramana does not work for all. As per Shastras people like Ramana Maharishi

also have gone through Karma Yoga, probably in some previous life. Once you have prepared, you can go through Gyana Yoga as well.

Paralleling this, scriptures also talk of two types of lifestyles called Ashramas. The word Nishta means Ashrama or lifestyle. Scriptures mention four ashramas. Of the four, Grihastha Ashram and Sanyasa Ashram are pertinent here.

Pravrithi Nishta: It is Karma Pradhana Ashram

Nivriti Nishta: It is Gyana Pradhana Ashram.

Note: The word Samkhya in the shloka is associated with Gyanam.

Swamiji says a human being can lead life in three different ways. They are:

1. Go to Grihasthashrama, follow Karma Yoga, purify, then take up Sanyasa Yoga and become free.
2. Go to Grihasthashrama follow Karma Yoga, purify, continue in Grihasthashrama and gradually change to Gyana Yoga and become free. Such a person is called Grihastha Gyani.
3. Without Grihasthashrama go to Sanyasa. In Sanyasa perform Karma Yoga unique to Sanyasi's. A Sanyasi can perform Japas, Guru Seva, and other such exclusive activities identified for them. After purification he has to go to Gyana Yoga and attain freedom. Such a person is called a Sanyasi Gyani.

Both Sadhanas have to be completed. Citing an example: Screwdriver is used for screwing and a knife is used for cutting. You can cut fruits with a screwdriver as well while a knife can also occasionally screw.

Thus:

- Grihasthashrama is Karma Pradhana.

- Sanyasashrama is Gyana Pradhana.

Therefore Arjuna, do your duty. Right now your duty is to fight.

With Best Wishes,  
Ram Ramaswamy

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## Upadesa Saram, Class 1

Starting his teaching on Upadesha Saram, Swami Paramarthananda said it is another work of Bhagavan Ramana MahaRishi. It is a smaller work consisting of 30 verses. Upadesha Sahasri was another scripture written by Adi Shankaracharya, a large work consisting of 700 verses and 19 chapters. Upadesha Saram is a comprehensive work presenting the entire Vedic teaching in a nutshell. It presents all Sadhana's in a nut shell. Sad Darshanam another work of Ramana MahaRishi is primarily about Gyana Yoga while other yogas are only hinted at. Self-Enquiry is Gyana Yoga.

In this text all Sadhanani's are dealt with while Gyana Yoga is the primary Sadhana. Most of us are not ready for Gyana Yoga. Gyana Yoga requires Gyana Yogyatha. Without preparation Gyana Yoga will fail. We will not only fail, but we will also lose faith in Gyana Yoga in this process.

Gyana Yogyatha Sadhanani are the stepping stones for Gyanam. Although they are a secondary spiritual Sadhana, they are required to make the primary sadhana work. They are very important even though they do not give us moksha.

Any scripture dealing with Karma and Gyana is called comprehensive. Upadesha Saram is comprehensive. Swami Dayananda Saraswathi considered this the second most important

book, first one being Tatva Bodha. Tatva Bodha, Upadesha Saram and Gita's Chapter 13 are considered the best texts for beginning Vedanta.

Like other works of Ramana MahaRishi, Upadesha Saram was written at the request of a devotee. Ramana himself was not inclined towards Vedantic writing. It was his devotee Murugesan who asked him to write this book. Murugesan was a Tamil scholar. He was writing a book based upon a story of the puranas. In this story, Shiva comes to the world as a Vedantic Guru or Rishi. The story goes that some ascetic householders attached to the Karma Kandi or Poorva Mimamsa tradition were performing a Yaga. Poorva Mimamsi's or Karma Kandi's believed in rituals. They believed rituals would take them to heaven (Swarga). They also believed rituals, would give them the four Goals of Hindu Life: Kama, Artha, Dharma & Moksha .

Furthermore, they believed that rituals themselves gave the phalams and one need not believe in God. They believed Veda is eternal, world is eternal, and rituals themselves give us what we want without a God . They were non-believing Atheistic People. Due to some obstacle they were not able to come out of Karma Kanda. Lord Shiva wanted to help them and educate them. So, Shiva staged a drama. Murugesan wanted to write about this.

The story goes, one day these Rishi's decided to perform a Yaga. At that time Shiva called Vishnu and requested his help. They were friends. Shiva wanted Vishnu to come down as Mohini. He agreed to come down himself as an enchanting Brahmachari Bikshu. He suggested they ask the Rishi's and Rishi's wives respectively, for Bhiksha. Mohini decided to go to the Yagashala. The Rishi's saw Mohini and enchanted by her, followed her. But suddenly she disappeared. They realized something was wrong and they returned embarrassed. Upon return they noticed that their wives were not there.

At the same time Shiva as a Bhikshu had gone to the houses of

Rishi's and their wives seeing his enchanting form followed him. The Rishi's ran back home and saw their wives following Shiva. In anger the Rishi's attacked Shiva and used the mantra Abhicharaka Karmani to destroy him. Shiva, however, just stood and smirked at them. The Rishi's understood that there was something wrong with their rituals. Then, in defeat, they surrendered to the Bhikshu. Now, Shiva coming into his form taught them the limitations of Karma. They were told they have to come to Atma Gyanam. This was taught to Karma Kandi Rishi's in Darukavanam in Darukavana Upadesha. This was the story in Puranas that Murugesan was writing about. He was at the stage of writing about Shiva's Upadesha. He wanted Ramana MahaRishi to complete the Upadesha part. Murugesan was a great Bhakta of Ramana and he believed Ramana was Lord Shiva himself. Acceding to his request Ramana MahaRishi composed Shiva Darukavanam Upadesha Sara. Upadesha means teaching while Sara means essence of.

In this teaching, Karma, proper handling of Karma, limits of Karma and beyond, are discussed. In Vedas too Karma Kanda is a Gyana Yogyata Sadhanam. Ramana composed it originally in Tamil for Murugesan and called it Upadesha Undhiyan (a type of composition). Later Ramana himself recomposed it in Sanskrit, Telugu and Malayalam. So, he wrote the book in four languages. Ramana himself wrote all four. This is the background for Upadesha Saram.

In this text Anushtup chanda metre is used. It is the smallest metre. It is sung in Punnagavarali Ragam. The Saram is in two parts.

Shlokas 1-13: Gyana Yogyatha Sadhanani. A variety of Karmas as per Karmakanda are described. They include:

- Kayika Karma: Typical actions
- Vachika Karma: Vocal actions
- Manasa Karma: Upsasana action including Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali.

Shlokas 14- 30 is Vedanta Sara or Gyana Yoga.

Shloka #1:

In this shloka Ramana MahaRishi refutes Poorvamimasaka's philosophy of ritualism. The misconception of Poorva Mimamsa is that Karma is without God. Sri Krishna says Karma without God will result in a huge bondage. Every stage of Karma must involve God. God is involved in karma in all stages. In initial stage, God receives all Karmas. Hence God is called Bhokta. Later God molds this Karma into a Karmaphalam. Bhagavan converts every Karma into phalam. This transformation has to consider the many, many, laws governing the world that are involved in the conversion. Only someone who knows all laws can perform such a complex conversion.

Why do human efforts fail? Because we are not able to consider all laws that apply to our effort. This is the first factor.

The second mistake is that Karmi's think Karma can give us an eternal Swarga. This is a misconception. Karma phalam is anithyam. Money is produced in time and lost in time. As the cause, so is the effect. The Veda read by Poorvamimasakas will not produce Moksha.

In shloka 1 Ramana negates these two ideas. In current world stress is a big problem. Meditation helps with stress. However, God is the only stress buster. Karma (godless) Produces Stress. Karma Yoga produces Shanthi. Shloka #1 establishes God.

Note: At the end of the class Dr. Janaki Raman gave us a beautiful portrayal of Ramana MahaRishi's life. He is a blessed man in that he has seen Ramana in person.

With Best Wishes,  
Ram Ramaswamy

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# Kaivalya Upanishad, Class 13 – Summary

Greetings,

Swamiji summarized the Kaivalya Upanishad's teachings today. This Upanishad is known by its name as it gives Kaivalyam or Moksha or non-duality to the seeker. There is no second thing in the cosmos to limit me, not space, nor time nor object to limit me. Spatial, temporal and objectal limitations do not exist for me. This Upanishad is from the Atharvana Veda. It has all essentials of Vedantic teachings, although it is not part of the 10 important Upanishads mentioned by Shankaracharya. Being a part of Atharvana Veda it has the same Shanthipatha (opening hymn) as others. The Shanthipatha seeks to make the mind, body and thought capable of obtaining knowledge. Vigna- nivrithihi and Karana Yogyata are its goals.

Mantra 1:

The first mantra is introduction of the student Ashvalayana Rishi approaching Brahmaji himself. The Student knows what he wants. He is a prepared disciple. Indications of a well-informed disciple are:

1. He primarily wishes moksha.
2. He knows moksha can be obtained only through Gyanam.
3. Gyanam can only be obtained only through Shastra Pramanam.
4. He knows that Shastram will reveal its content only under a competent Acharya.

Mantras 2-4:

Brahmaji presents Gyana Sadhane (means) and Gyana Phalam

(benefits). Gyana Sadhane: There are two means available. They are:

1. Primary or direct or Sakshat.
2. Sahakari or supportive cause.

Citing an example, for a mango tree the primary cause is the mango seed. Secondary causes can include the soil, water, pesticides etc. Secondary causes cannot, however, produce a mango.

Primary Sadhanani: Sravanam is a consistent and systematic study under a competent Guru.

Mananam is until I am convinced of all my doubts. It is turning knowledge into conviction by removal of intellectual obstacles.

Nidhidhyasanam is removal of conditioning or reorientation. My poornatvam does not depend on external factors. This re-orientation or de-conditioning may take decades. Removing emotional obstacles is Nidhidhaysanam.

The above three together are called Vedanta Vichara.

The three sadhanas (the primary means) prescribed by Brahmaji are:

- 1) Shradha Yoga also called Vedanta Sravanam.
- 2) Bhakthi Yoga also called Mananam Yoga.
- 3) Dhyana Yoga also called Nidhidhyasanam yoga.

The Sahakari (secondary means) Sadhanani are all the values mentioned in shastras. Brahmaji places emphasis on one value namely Tyaga or gradually learning to drop all your dependencies. The fewer supports I use, the better. Citing example of memory, years ago one memorized, however, today one depends on computers. In this process we have lost our ability to perform simple mental mathematics. We use TV, Computers etc. as external supports to cure our loneliness. There is nothing wrong with being lonely. Go for a walk, alone. Live in

an Ashram, alone. This training to drop dependencies is called Tyagaha.

The advantage of Tyaga is I am ready to lose anything at any time. This can be born out of discrimination or devotion. Shankara emphasizes the Sanyasa aspect of Gyanam. Sanyasa is our inner preparedness to lose. Shankaracharya's four Ashram's are for this purpose.

Gyana Phalam: Is Moksha or freedom. Freedom from emotional issues is Jivan mukti. Freedom from cycle of birth and death is Videhi Mukti.

Mantras 5-10:

Dhyanam is the topic discussed. Three topics are discussed. They are:

1. Dhyana Sadhanani
2. Saguna Dhyanam and
3. Nirguna Dhyanam

Dhyana Sadhanani include:

Desha-Or place of meditation, should be quiet and clean.

Kala: Or time of meditation, should be when the mind is Satvic. When the mind is alert and non-wandering.

Asanam: Or seat of meditation, it should not be too soft or too hard.

Sharira Sthithi: Or the condition of body, sense organs, mind and intellect should be receptive.

Meditate as a Sanyasi not as a worldly person. Mediate free of worries. Drop all roles such as wife, husband etc., during meditation. If at all, evoke role of Shishya or Devotee. Offer namaskara to Guru before meditation so that his teaching is evoked.

Saguna Dhyanam:

This is meditation on Ishta Devata. Kaivalya recommends Shiva Dhyanam. One can choose any Devata. Aneka Roopa and Vishwa Roopa Ishta Devata are the same.

Nirguna Dhyanam: Means meditating on Brahman without roopam.

Which Dhyanam to perform is a question that can come up? It depends. If one is in early stages, Saguna Dhyanam before Vedanta study may work. After the study, Nirguna Dhyanam will benefit.

Phalam: Saguna Gyana Yogyata.

Nidhidhyasanam: or Gyana Nishta is when Gyanam gets assimilated. Aham Brahma Asmi becomes spontaneous. Ramana Maha Rishi said " If 100 people call me a donkey, I still do not have any doubts that I am human." This is conviction or Nishta.

Mantra 12-15:

Brahmaji introduces Sravanam and Mananam. He uses The Arani Manthanam or churning as an example. There is only one consciousness that manifests as Jiva (micro) and Ishwara (macro). Due to two reflecting mediums we have this Jiva and Ishwara distortions. It is only a seeming distortion. Just as the face is same even when it reflects on a convex or concave mirror.

What type of distortion is it?

In micro it is the Sharira Trayam with inferior attributes or Nikrishta Guna such as Limited knowledge, Power etc., resulting in the Created.

In macro distortion it is with superior attributes or Utkrishta Gunas such as Sarva Shakthi, Vyapak etc., resulting in the Creator.

While Original Consciousness (OC) does not have attributes,

attributes come from the distorting media. Our goal is to see Jiva without attributes. Karanatvam of Ishvara and Jiva are all seeming attributes of OC evident through media. Thus OC is the Karta, Bhokta and Bhogam. Removal of attributes and maintaining Consciousness results in Jivatma Paramatma Aikyam.

Mantras 16-23:

This is the Mahavakya portion. It also discusses Jivatma Paramatma Aikyam. Each mantra is a Mahavakya.

To this Atma is added the prefix Jiva and Parama. Removal of Jiva and Parama is called Vilakshanam. Once you remove the name and form there is neither the wave nor the ocean. This is "Aham Brahma Asmi". The Wave is not afraid of mortality. The phalam is Moksha.

Mantras 24-24:

This is the conclusion of Upanishad or the Upasamhara. Brahmaji says, suppose one does not understand the teaching, do not give up. One has to go through some additional coaching. Karma and Upsana are the preparatory classes. Shastra Parayanam is one such Karma. Kaivalya Upanishad Parayanam itself will make you prepared. Other Vedic or Non Vedic Parayanams can also help. This Karma will remove all obstacles of mind also called Duritham. Our past Karmas are usually the cause of these obstacles. After preparation come back to Kaivalya sravanam, mananam and nidhidhyasanam.

While the Upanishad recommends Sri Rudra Parayanam it is not compulsory.

Thus the seeker gets the knowledge and the impact of teaching increases. Then he obtains Jivan mukti and eventually Videhi mukti. The word Kaivalyam is mentioned in the concluding mantras.

With Best Wishes,  
Ram Ramaswamy