

Bagawat Geeta, Class 41

Greetings All,

Shloka # 13:

“ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १३ ॥”

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ 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

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

Bagawat Geeta, Class 40

Greetings All,

Shloka # 11:

“कर्मणो यो नान्तरहितो भवेत्सुखदुःखेषु च ।
सर्वत्र समो भवेत्कर्मणो भोगेषु च ॥ ३.११ ॥”

Continuing his teaching of Gita and recapping last week's lesson, Swami Parmarthananda said, Sri Krishna is looking at Karma Yoga from different angles. The general definition of Karma Yoga is:

Proper Action + Proper Attitude=Karma Yoga

Proper action means giving more and taking less. It also implies self-less action.

Selfish action and selfless actions both are allowed, however, selfless action should predominate in life. Harmful action, however, is to be totally avoided. The attitude must be appropriate. Dedicating selfless actions and selfish actions with an attitude of Devarpanam to God and anything I receive in life must be with Prasada Budhi.

Sri Krishna is looking at it from different angles.

First angle is as a commandment from God. If a person refuses a life of Karma Yoga then he gets Pratyavaya Papam, a special papam, where he is imprisoned in Samsara. So, out of fear, one should follow Karma Yoga.

Second angle is one of love and worship. Swamiji says, in the first angle fear is used, but fear is not a healthy emotion. Fear is the darkroom in which all negatives are developed. Psychologists say, " Never try to discipline your children through fear". In fear a child's mind will not grow. They end up becoming terrible fathers, husbands, and teachers. In such cases it is the mistake of the parents who raised them in fear. In extreme cases punishment may be used, but as per Shastra's it is to be used sparingly.

Sri Krishna also used fear, as a method, to follow Karma Yoga. He, however, prefers love and worship rather than fear. Karma Yoga performed out of love is called Yagna. What God has given you, this body, this life etc., is his gift. When we get a gift we should reciprocate. What you do with the God's gift is your gift to the Lord. The body is a gift. I can enjoy the body living a life of indulgence or I can use it for Paropkara. Trees produce lot of fruits, as a gift. Even if one throws stones at them they still keep giving their fruits. The cow produces milk all for sacred purposes, our coffee and our

don't exploit nature to feed my greed. The natural harmony is maintained. The seasons are maintained. Our lives are dependent on rains. "When green goes from city, it is red", meaning air pollution increases and it becomes dangerous. A society is a healthy one when Dharmic people are allowed to follow dharma.

Follow Karma Yoga and God will grant you all blessings.

Swamiji points out that a question can come up. When I perform action I will get the Karma Phalam. Why should I ask God for the Phalam?

The answer is, phalam is the result of my work. I have worked hard for it. However, per scriptures phalam is per nature's laws. Citing an example, a microphone was discovered because the law for such a device was already present in nature. Human intellect discovered TV, but its mind cannot discover these natural laws. God has given us intellect. He has given us natural laws. My glory is only to tap into such a law. When you tap into such a law, please thank that God. Hence we thank God when we eat. Why do we do this? After all, I have worked for it, right? The production of food is possible due to laws created by God. Just remember God for a few minutes. Even our physical health is based on bio-chemical laws. The food is digested, transported and waste removed. Every disease is possible due to bio chemical laws. When my body temperature rises it is due to a natural law to fight a disease. I have never produced any law. I am only tapping into a law. Never forget this. If you do, you are a thief. Hence you should worship Devathas. If you don't thank them, you are an ungrateful person. It is the worst kind of papam. Ungratefulness has no Prayaschittam. Even in western cultures that is why you thank some one.

Citing another example Swamiji says he read recently that many temples have lands and properties assigned to them so that the temple can be maintained. However, unscrupulous people rent temple lands for one paisa. They are educated people too and

body and mind to install the Veda Mantra; else I will pollute the Vedas. Upanayanam is very important for Vedic chanting. Even a pucca Brahmin cannot learn Vedas without Upanayana samskara. To paint a wall one has to sandpaper the wall first. Atma Gyanam occurs only when Kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada and matsarya (lust, anger, greed, illusion, pride and envy) are removed. So, Karma yoga is the sand paper to cleanse the mind. The seeker of Karma Yoga is not interested in material prosperity. The whole world may consider him a failure because it considers material prosperity as the basis of success. Karma Yogi does not consider material success as important. His focus is on inner purification irrespective of whether material prosperity comes or not. Hence the shloka:

Isvararpitam necchaya krrtam
cittasodhakam muktisadhakam

If you dedicate your life to the Lord, and if you consider material prosperity as Subservient to spiritual growth then your karma yoga will lead to mental purity.

This mental purity may promote mukti sadakam. And therefore the third angle is Karma Yoga as an inner purifier. And that is why we say there is no failure in karma yoga.

Failure is usually in terms of material accomplishments. In karma Yoga inner purification takes place irrespective of material prosperity.

And therefore Krishna says, those people who convert their life into worship, receive the consequences as Ishwaraprasada or as yajna shistam. Yagya Shistam means left over from Yagya or Ishwaraprasada. Thus, one who considers all the karma phalams as yagya shistam (prasada) and eats it (means enjoy it), such a person becomes free from all the papams.

Citing an example, suppose you buy a book, and something is written on the book, the book is called a second hand book. The same second hand book signed by a mahatma becomes very valuable.

So if you do not offer to the Lord and enjoy without offering to the Lord, without acknowledging the Lord's grace; it is papam. Even medicine is a law of the Lord, if a medicine has a curing property, it is God's gift; therefore I consume medicine as Ishwara Prasada. If you do not do that, Sri Krishna says you are a papi.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

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 Upasya 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. Vidyananya 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

Bagawat Geeta, Class 39

Greetings All,

Shloka # 9:

ॐ कर्मणो भव्यते जायते मृतयोऽपि ॥ ३.९ ॥
ॐ कर्मणो भव्यते जायते मृतयोऽपि ॥ ३.९ ॥

“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 Shastra'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

Upadesa Saram, Class 4

Greetings All,

Refreshing our memory of the last class Swami Paramarthananda discussed shlokas 3 and 4 respectively. In the first two verses of this book Ramana MahaRishi was refuting the claims of the Poorvamimsaka philosopher. Karma, secular or sacred, cannot give one Moksha. Karma is in fact a big roadblock to liberation. Karma has by its nature a snowballing effect. Thus, karma leads to more and more Karma. In this process a person becomes an extrovert. This quality in turn blocks one's path of Self Enquiry.

Shloka # 3: In this shloka, Swamiji says, even though Karma is an obstacle to Moksha still it can be converted to a medicine or Tonic for spiritual growth. This can be compared to the way snake venom can be converted into a snakebite antidote. Thus, Karma can promote inner growth. Karma converted to a Sadhana becomes Karma Yoga. Karma Yoga helps with spiritual growth.

How to perform this conversion? By dedicating all Karmas at the feet of the Lord. Thus, all our daily karmas from waking, brushing teeth, eating, working and sleeping all these activities can be performed as a puja. A prayer is performed to the Neem tree even as one obtains its twig for cleaning the teeth. Known as Danta Dhavanam (cleaning the teeth), here one prays to the Neem tree requesting it's blessing in removing all impurities from ones mind even as we brush our teeth. Several mantras are chanted before eating making it an offering to God. All these are known as Ishwara Arapana Bhavana. It is an offering to God with the prayer " Let this Karma turn out well".

Discussing Karma Phalam, Swamiji says, it is consequence of our Karmas that result in the stresses and strains of life. One does not know what the outcome of our Karmas will be.

Nobody can guarantee a result. In Karma Yoga, one receives the consequences of one's actions, good or bad, as Ishwara Prasadam.

Karma is of two types. Sakama Karma and Nishkama Karma.

1. Sakama karma's are actions that are for one's material prosperity such as house, family, children etc. Its primary focus is material growth. It may provide some spiritual benefits as well, if performed as Karma Yoga.
2. Nishkama karma's are actions performed exclusively for inner growth. It may provide the benefit of some material growth as well.

Karma Yoga says both Sakama and Nishkama Karmas should be performed as an offering to God. Both will contribute to our inner growth, only in different proportions. It should be noted that while the results of Sakama Karma are usually visible through one's acquisitions such as a car, a house etc. Nishkama Karma's results of inner growth are often invisible.

Aim of Karma Yoga should be to increase the percentage of Nishkama Karma. Shastra's prescribe some Nishkama Karmas known as Pancha Maha Yagya's for one's inner growth.

A seeker has to set priorities in life. Should one go after material growth or inner growth? A choice of material growth means the focus of one's life is on external acceptance, social status, money etc. However, a life focused on inner growth will purify one's mind and reduce the Raga and Dvesha. Raga is attachment to external world. Dvesha is dislike of attachments to external world. Raga and Dvesha alone cause all the stresses in life. Thus:

Raga is due to powerful expectations. Raga can also be called extreme attachment.

Dvesha is due to the mindset that " I expect this not to happen." Dvesha can also be called extreme aversion. Both can

cause stress in our life.

A karma Yogi makes Raga and Dvesha just preferences. It is an attitude of: If available, it is fine, if not, that is fine too. Swamji says an intolerant mind is an irritable mind. The word Anayas means relaxed mind. Vedanta requires a relaxed mind. Once Raga and Dvesha are reduced they will promote Moksha. One has to keep in mind Karma Yoga cannot give Moksha. Karma will, however, prepare the mind for Moksha.

As already said, material growth is tangible while inner growth is intangible. That is the reason one does not recognize inner growth. Peace and happiness depends on inner growth. Peace and happiness has no relation to external growth. Comfort is not the same as peace and happiness. A rich man sitting in the comfort of his bungalow may be in great turmoil, while the poor man after a day's hard work may be blissfully asleep in a field. Swamiji says, " I can be comfortably unhappy". Between the two the choice is very clear. Always choose the path of inner growth.

Shloka # 4: So, what are these karmas that provide inner growth? Ramana maharishi says they are:

1. **Puja:** Ishwara aradhana. Worship of God, daily. One chooses a deity, Ishta Devata, to worship. God in any form as a symbol is worshipped.
2. **Japa:** Nama Japa. Recite and repeat a particular name of God. Sri Krishna says in the Gita that Japa Yagya is an excellent form of worship.
3. **Chintanam:** Ishta Devata Dhyanam, Upasanam and or Meditation.

It should be noted that different organs of the body perform these three Karmas.

Puja: is Kaya Karyam or performed by the physical body and physical actions.

Japa: is performed by Vak Karyam or organ of speech, the mouth.

Chintanam: is Manaha Karyam or performed by the mind.

Ramana MahaRishi now expands on each of these three karmas. Puja is now explained in shloka # 5 and Japa is explained in shloka # 6.

Shloka # 5:

Swamiji says there are two types of Pujas. He calls them grade 1 and grade 2 pujas respectively.

Grade 1 Puja: is a formal puja performed daily in front of an idol. In its simplest form this puja should consist of offering flowers, Naivedyam and Deeparadhana. There are many books on how to perform a puja. Puja is a required to be performed for spiritual growth. It is also a Raksha for us. The daily puja is a Kavacham. Negative forces are all around us but they will not touch one or one's family. Through Puja you are also setting an example for future generations. Swamiji says, if a father smokes, the child will pick it up. All daily Pujas should end with the prayer:

ॐ सर्वान् भवन्तु सुखिनाः

सर्वान् भवन्तु निरामयाः

सर्वान् भवन्तु भद्राणि प्राप्स्यन्तु

ॐ सर्वान् भवन्तु सुखिनाः सर्वान् भवन्तु निरामयाः

ॐ सर्वान् भवन्तु सुखिनाः सर्वान् भवन्तु निरामयाः

Om, Sarve bhavantu sukhinaḥ

Sarve santu nirāmayāḥ

Sarve bhadraṇi paśyantu

Mā kashchit duḥkha bhāgbhavet

Om Shāntiḥ, Shāntiḥ, Shāntiḥ

May all be prosperous and happy

May all be free from illness

May all see what is spiritually uplifting

May no one suffer

Om peace, peace, peace

Swamji says this prayer has a cumulative effect.

Grade 1 Puja then expands to Grade 2 Puja. In Grade 1, God is worshipped as the idol in front of me. Here God is a small entity.

Grade 2 Puja:

In reality, God is very big. The entire universe is a manifestation of God. Sri Krishna elaborates on God in Gita chapters 7 through 11. In Chapter 11 he provides the Vishwaroopa Darshanam. In Vishnu Sahasranamam God is described as a person in some sholkas while in others he is described as the whole creation. The objective of the Grade 2 Puja is to look at the whole universe as the Ishta Devata or as AshtaMoorthishwara (God with Eight aspects). The eight aspects are: Pancha Bhoota (Earth or *Prithvi*; Water or *Jal* ; Fire or *Agni*; Air or *Vayu* and then Ether or *Akasha*), Surya (all stars), Chandra (all planets and their satellites-non self luminous) and All Jivas.

Grade 2 Puja is service to all living beings (human, animals, plants, and insentient beings). It is common to see a Tulsi

Plant in a Hindu house. The Tulsi is worshipped for all plants. Cow is usually fed on behalf of all animals. One human being is supposed to be fed everyday on behalf of mankind. Swamiji says, before going to bed, one should ask oneself if I have contributed to the AshtaMoorthishwara today or not?

Ramana MahaRishi says Grade 2 puja is a more important puja. One should give more than one takes in. Chinmaya Mission has a logo that says: What I give is more than what I take.

How to perform this grade 2 Puja? Service to the world can be performed in many ways including through offering of time, money and consoling words. Even offering a prayer such as "Sarve bhavantu sukhinaha..." is very impactful.

Service performed with right Bhavana becomes a puja. In such a service arrogance does not rise, one does not seek recognition and there is no expectation of reciprocation. I am fulfilled in the service itself. My service itself becomes a puja. I am happy in the service. It is not my duty to seek acknowledgement. I have no right to ask for gratitude of others for my service.

Karma Eva Phalam. The Karma Yogi considers the performance of the Karma in itself as the Karma Phalam. Such a person enjoys himself as a Karta. He does not want to be a Bhokta.

Swamiji says such a person performs any work with complete devotion and reverence. He performs the work as a dedication to God. In doing so, he performs the work completely and thoroughly. He even performs more than is required. He is not concerned about the result of his work. He does not feel he is giving more and not receiving back in proportion. The performance of the work itself gives him the greatest joy and satisfaction. Such a person is a true Karma Yogi.

Thus from both pujas inner growth occurs.

In Shloka 6 Japa is explained.

Shloka # 6: There are two types of Japas. One is Vachika and other is Manasika.

Vachika is oral recitation. Manasika is mental recitation. Vachika can be in a loud or medium sounding voice. Manasika Japa is quiet without any sound.

Between the two Manasika Japa is more powerful. In this mode one also does not disturb others.

(My Note on Raga and Dvesha: Extreme attachments and extreme aversions are both obstacles on the yogi's path to freedom.

Attachments (raga) arise from our previous experiences of pleasure and happiness. Aversions (dvesha) emerge from previous experiences of pain and suffering. Over time, our sense of self-identity is largely formed by a long list of such likes and dislikes. We define ourselves as a collection of our previous emotional experiences.

We can become subconsciously driven to seek opportunities to repeat previous experiences of pleasure over and over. This is the seed of addiction. The object or person or experience that originally generated pleasure becomes the symbol or substitute for the pleasure itself. Greed and lust and addiction are all downfalls of excessive attachments.

We can also become subconsciously driven to avoid previously painful experiences. Our desire to protect ourselves limits our options in life and clouds our ability to see clearly. As in the case of attachments, we mistake the person or situation or object that caused us pain with the painful experience itself. We can go to great lengths to avoid situations that we are afraid of – whether they are physical, emotional, or spiritual. Fear and hatred are the downfalls of excessive aversion.)

Take away from this class:

Swamiji disclosed the great secret of Karma Yoga. Keep the following in mind as you perform any kind of work including at your office, home, social etc.

Swamiji says such a person performs any work:

- As a dedication to God
- With complete devotion and reverence.
- Completely and thoroughly
- Even more than is required
- Without any concern about the result of his work
- Without feeling he is giving more and not receiving back in proportion.
- In such a manner that the performance of the work itself gives him the greatest joy and satisfaction.
- In such a manner of puja, that arrogance does not rise,
- Without seeking recognition
- Without any expectation of reciprocation.
- As a Karma Yogi and considers the performance of the Karma in itself as the Karma Phalam.
- With the feeling, I am fulfilled in the service itself.
- With the feeling my service itself is a puja. I am happy in the service.
- Without seeking acknowledgement.
- Without asking for gratitude of others for my service.
- With a pleasant smile.
- With great enthusiasm.

Such a person is a true Karma Yogi.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

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 Shastra 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**

you, ask what can you do for your country"? Immature person may not follow the law, hence this commandment. If you don't perform the Karmas or omitting your duties you will get special Papam called Prathyavaya Papam and will fall down spiritually. Hence, the language of threat used, by scriptures.

Shloka # 9:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.९ ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.९ ॥

“ This world is bound by works other than those done as 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

Is Life Predetermined?

Many events of our life are out of our control and most of our life appears to be predetermined. It appears that we may be able to influence only a small portion of our life. Our birth is destined. Our death is destined. And most of our life appears destined. Then, is it correct to say that our life is destined and we can do nothing to change our destiny?

I had the privilege of meeting the Swami Paramarthananda in August 2016 and at that time I presented this question to him.

Before I present the answer from the Swamiji, some discussions regarding the laws of karma. Karmas can be classified, based on their occurrence, into three types:

1. **Sanjitha Karma:** Sanjitha karma is the sum total of all karma accumulated from our previous jenmas (lives). Sanjitha karmas will mature over many jenmas (births/lives).
2. **Agami Karma:** Agami Karmas are generated by our actions in this life. Some agami karma will mature in this life and some will become sanjitha karma for maturity in later lives.
3. **Prarabtha Karma:** Prarabtha karma is the karma maturing or fructifying in this life. Maturing karma could be either from this life or from previous lives.

Some of the laws of karma:

1. Some of the prarabtha karma are from this life and others are from previous lives. Maturity or fructifications of Karmas is not linear. This is similar to seeds of plants – some seeds sprout quickly while others take longer.
2. Karma includes both punyam (positive karmas) and pavam (negative karmas). Punyams are the result of our dharmic actions and pavams are the result of our adharmic actions.
3. While I do not control what has happened in my prior lives (sanjitha karma) or what is happening in this life (prarabtha karma), I can control how I react to my current situation (agami karma). A dharmic and purposeful life can increase punyam or decrease pavam.
4. All karmas – sanjitha, prarabtha and agami karmas- are the results of my actions in this life and previous lives. I did not have control over any and all of my actions of my previous lives. I do have control over any and all of my actions in this life. I and I alone created all of my karmas. While my adharmic choices in the past have resulted in current unfavorable situations, I should make dharmic choices here and now. I can't change the choices I have made in the past, but I do have the free will to make the correct choices now.
5. When prarabtha karma for this life is exhausted, the body falls.
6. When sanjitha karma is exhausted, we get moksha or liberated.

Swamiji stated that some of the prarabtha karma are parapalam and some are dhurpalam, that is they are weak and controllable or strong and non controllable. However, we do not know which ones we can control and which ones we can not control. So we must always exercise our free will and make

dharmic choices. We may also be able to reduce the impact of the controllable prarabtha karma by doing prayachitham (remedial measures). Prayachithams are of two types:

1. Lowkika prayachitham: These are worldly activities we can perform. Example of a lowkika prayachitham is going to a doctor when getting ill.
2. Sasthrika prayachitham: These are the rituals mentioned in scriptures. If these rituals are performed as described in the scriptures, the impact of prarabtha karma can be reduced or eliminated.

When we face any adverse situation we should always do our dharmic duty and take proper prayachitham – either lowkika prayachitham or sasthrika prayachitham. For example, when one gets seriously ill, one should seek the treatment from a doctor. Refusing to follow medical advice and accepting the medical condition as our destiny is fatalism. Our scriptures do not allow fatalism and fatalism is fundamentally against the duties of a human being. Bagawan Krishna has emphasized this many times in Bagawat Geeta.

In conclusion, we always have free will and that free will gives us control over Agami Karma. A dharmic life can reduce agami karma pavam. We can also do some prayaschitham for prarabtha Karma to mitigate a negative phalam.

Notes:

- This post is based on my meeting with Swamiji in August 2016 as well many of his classes, specifically his classes in Tatva Bodha and his class number 148 – Chapter 10, Verse 33 of Bagawat Gita. I also recommend the readers to listen to those classes and get their own perspective (this post is from my perspective).
- I thank Ram Ramaswamy for framing this question in logical way. Many parts of this post are borrowed from his original question, which is reproduced below:

To exhaust Prarabhdha karma one gets rebirth. This is destiny. While living, one experiences prarabhdha karma phalam, this too is destiny. Once Prarabhdha Karma is exhausted for this lifetime, the body falls. This is also destiny.

Agami Karma's are new karmas generated by our actions in this lifetime. Some Agami Karma phalam will occur in this lifetime itself. Others will become Sanchitha Karma that will come back in a later life.

We do have some control on Agami Karma or so it appears. A purposeful life can reduce agami karma. We can also do some Prayaschitham for Prarabhdha Karma as well to mitigate a negative phalam.

Looks like there is an only a small portion that we can influence. Most of our life appears destined. Our birth is destined. Our death is destined. Some parts of our life are also destined; we just do not know which part.

Is it then correct to say that based upon the part (Small) we do not control, our life is not destined? Even Ramana Maharishi told his mother: What has to happen will happen. What should not happen will not happen, however much we try. Is this not destiny?

Upadesa Saram, Class 3

Greetings to all,

Shloka # 1:

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

Continuing his teaching of Upadesha Saram Swami

Paramarathananada refreshed our memory about the last class. He said this text is the essence of the teaching of Lord Shiva and it begins with a negation of the ritualistic practices that were the core belief of the Poorvamimasakas.

In Shlokas # 1 and # 2 Ramana Maharishi addresses this negation. The Poorvamimasakas have a misconception regarding Ishwara and Karma. In the first shloka misconception about Ishwara is negated. In the second shloka the misconception about Karma is negated as well.

In the first shloka Ramana MahaRishi points out to the existence of Ishwara. Vedapramanam and logic supports this. Creation is not an accident. It confirms: Ishwara Asthi.

In second shloka Ramana MahaRishi confirms that it is Ishwara alone who brings out the world as well as the Vedas for the world. In several places Jagat Karta Ishwara is mentioned. He is the giver of Vedas. Negating the proposition of Poorvamimasakas that the world is eternal and that God need not create it, Ramana MahaRishi says both the world and Vedas were brought by God.

Saying that Karma does not produce Phalam also negates their third misconception. Even the laws of Creation cannot produce Phalam. It requires a discriminating person to produce the Phalam. Karma cannot do it nor can the various laws of the universe. Both are Jadam's. Here, Ishwara alone gives the Phalam, keeping the Karma of the person in mind.

Shloka # 2:

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

Here Ramana MahaRishi refutes the misconception of the Poorvamimasakas regarding Karma. Ramana MahaRishi gives us three important lessons in this regard. They are:

1. Karma cannot give us liberation. All types of Karmas including Service, devotional, meditational and ritualistic will not produce Moksha.
2. On the other hand Karma is an obstacle to Moksha.
3. Not only is Karma an obstacle, it is actually a cause of bondage as well.

Explaining each lesson further:

1. The misconception that Karma can give is liberation:
 1. The Karma Phalam from all Karmas such as Service, devotional, meditational and ritualistic are finite in nature or Anithya whereas Moksha is defined as infinite or Nithyaha. Vedas reveal this as well. They say all Karma Phalam's are anithyam. Both Mundako Upanishad and Gita say the same.
 2. Logic also reveals it. Action and Reaction are always equal and proportional. Karma always occurs in the finite as place, time and people are known. So, results too have to be finite. Sruthi reveals it as also our own experiences. Therefore Karma Phalam is Anithyam.
2. Karma cannot give us Moksha; it is actually an obstruction: Karma makes a person extrovert. Caught in activity, it leads to more activity. Karma does not give us time for introspection. Only in introspection can we think of Moksha, Gyanam, Vedanta Sravnam etc. A life without leisure does not permit this Self Enquiry. Therefore, Karma is an obstacle to Self Enquiry. In Karma, the mind becomes restless and shallow.
3. Karma cannot give us Moksha, it is actually an obstruction and it is a source of greater bondage.

In Karma one gets more and more enmeshed in Samsara. Karma leads to more Karma. It multiplies itself. Even if you want to get out of it, you cannot. It becomes like a whirlpool, in an ocean.

As we grow older Shastras say we should withdraw from Karma to Vanaprastha. However, in reality, we are not able to do so.

Thus, rebutting the misconception of Poorvamimasakas, Ramana Maharishi says Karma cannot give us Moksha.

Shloka # 3:

“ Action dedicated to God and done without desire purifies the mind.

It aids liberation.”

If Karma is so poisonous, can we renounce it? Shastras say we cannot

renounce it. The reasons are:

1. Our organs are made to be active. Gita chapter 3 also addresses it.
2. All human beings are born with countless desires for wealth, possessions and entertainment. We also tend to amass for our children and grandchildren. This creates Kama within us that in turn beget more and more Karma. Kama (desire) cannot be removed due to our Avidya or Self Ignorance. We do not have a choice. I would like to give up activity, but cannot. In such situations, Vedas come to help us. Vedas say even if Karma is a poison, it can be used in such a manner as to extract medicine from it. Citing example of snake venom, it is used to extract medicine for snakebite. Thus, even a poison becomes useful.

Even the painful experiences of our lives can be helpful if we know what to extract from them. Properly handled Karma is called Karma Yoga. This converts the poison into medicine.

How to convert Karma into Karma Yoga? Ramana Maharishi says, convert all Karmas into a Puja.

Ramana Maharishi is not saying anything new. Gita Chapter 3 also explains the process involved. Ishavasa Upanishad also addresses it.

Vedas say there are two types of Karmas. One is Sakama Karma and other is Nishkama Karma. What is the difference between the two?

Sakama Karma is materialistic Karma that produces primarily worldly benefits. These Karmas too, if offered as an offering to God, become spiritual benefits. Their spiritual benefit is however relatively small. Nevertheless, they too purify one's mind.

Nishkama Karma produces primarily spiritual benefits. These spiritual benefits are often intangible and invisible. It also produces material benefits but only as a byproduct. Nishkama Karma gets us closer to Moksha.

Both Karmas (Sakama and NishKama) must be performed as an offering to God.

Ramana Maharishi has not defined what are Sakama Karma's, as we all know them very well.

What are the NishKama Karmas? The Panch MahaYagna's are Nishkama Karmas. Swamiji will describe them in detail later.

Before starting any Karma, God is always to be remembered. One should strive to perform more and more NishKama Karmas and less and less of Sakama Karmas.

When inner growth is your primary goal, you are then considered a seeker.

When material Growth is your primary goal, even if you a religious person, you are not yet a seeker.

When I am obsessed with what I have, I am a materialistic person. However, when I am obsessed with what I want to be, I am a Karma Yogi. Such a Karma Yogi is a promoter of Moksha.

Swamiji reminded us that Ramana MahaRishi's teaching are very concise and as such should be studied with other scriptures.

Shloka # 4:

“ Ritualistic worship, chanting, and meditation are done with the body, voice and the mind; they excel each other in the ascending order.”

What are the NishKama Karmas? Ramana MahaRishi describes them at three levels:

1. Kayika Karma: Here the physical activity is the dominant, while verbal and mental are also present. Many rituals require physical activity. Puja is one such activity. All NishKama Puja performed without seeking materialistic benefit is considered the best. Regular Puja is very important for a seeker. Many people who study Vedanta do not perform Puja. Without Puja transformation does not take place. Many People who are seeking “Who am I” often forget the Puja. They say Ramana MahaRishi never did Puja. They seem to forget that he was at a different level from most of them. Puja is the best method of Kayika Karma.
2. Vachika Karma: is Japa offered to God.
3. Manas Karma: Is Ishwara Dhyanam. With Best Wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 36

Shloka # 3:

“The blessed Lord Said:

0 Sinless One! Two kinds of disciplines in this world were set forth by Me of yore-for Samkhyas the disciple of knowledge , and for the Yogins, that of works.”

Recapping shloka # 3, Swami Parmarthananda, said, after

listening to teachings in chapter 2, Arjuna now has questions about the roles Karma Yoga and Gyana Yoga. He thinks there is a choice between the two. This is a mistake. Sri Krishna at no point presented them as optional. All scriptures agree that Gyanam alone can liberate. So there is no choice. All have to go through Gyanam. Before going to Gyanam one has to be qualified for it. This can be done through Karma Yoga. Everybody has to prepare their mind and only then can they go to Gyana Yoga. So there is no choice, both are essential. One prepares the mind and the other removes ignorance. Arjuna did not understand this, hence his question. Sri Krishna wanted Arjuna to fully understand this requirement of scriptures. Here Sri Krishna introduces the concepts of Sadhana and Life style (also called Nishta). Everybody requires both of them. The lifestyles indicated are:

- 1) Pravrithi Marga and
- 2) Nivrithimarga

Pravrithi marga is Grihastashrama and Nivrithi marga is Sanyasa or Gyanashrama.

Swamiji says there are three possible lifestyles for human beings. They are:

1. Grihastashrama followed by Sanyasashrama. Karma , such as money, people etc. One uses these to lead an active life of service and in this process removes the sharp edges of mind. It removes the sharp edges of the personality like kamaḥ, krodhaḥ, lobhaḥ, mohāḥ, etc. This is just like a knife sharpened by a rough surface. After Grihastashrama one goes to Sanyasashrama. This stage is to acquire knowledge. Here the person is free of responsibilities. He should not possess anything. Yoga (acquisition) and Kshema (preservation) are both, burdens. He has to shave his head or grow his hair. Grihastha's duties are prescribed, as are different ones for a Sanyasi. For a grihastha, parayaṇam is rudram, chamakam, sukthani, etc.; for a

sanyasi daily parayanam is upaniṣhad, brahma sutras, bhaṣyam, etc. Even his (Sanyasi's) daily karmas are designed for the pursuit of Gyana yoga; and therefore Gyanam does not require any expenditure. However, Karma does require expenditure. This life style is considered the ideal one.

2. Grihasthashrama followed by a continuation in Grihasthashrama. One performs Karma yoga and then gradually moves to Gyana yoga, all within Grihasthashrama. This life style is a little more difficult but can be managed. In this life style, the Gyanam stage can occasionally be disturbed because of the life of a grihastha. This is just like a knife can occasionally be a screwdriver and a screwdriver too can occasionally be used for cutting. So this life style is strictly Grihasthashrama only.
3. In this third life style one skips Grihasthashrama to Sanyasa. Here the hope of purifying the mind is difficult. Here too one can manage with some difficulty. Here one performs Karma through Japas and service to his Guru. This is strictly Sanyasashrama. It is least favored of all life styles.

The first lifestyle is best and second one is also acceptable. So Arjuna, continue in the Grihasthashrama.

Clarification of some words used in the shloka 3:

Pura means- through the vedas, from past. It is said The Lord created Brahma. The Lord created the world and brought out Brahma from his navel, and at the same time gave the Vedic teaching as well. And that is reason Brahmaji has four heads representing the four Vedas.

Anadh: means the pure one or Arjuna.

Samkhya: means Sanyasi

So pure minded Arjuna, these two lifestyles I have introduced among the human beings; the animals do not have four ashramas; they do not have any problem. Only the human beings have these

two main ashramas, Grihastha and Sanyasa.

Explaining further, a Sanyasi is supposed to remove his sacred thread and give up Gayathri mantra. He now goes to Omkara Mantra. Swamiji explained the Om (A U M) is a shortened version of the Gayathri mantra.

Gayathri has got three lines; each line is simplified into one letter. Tatsavithurvarenyam is simplified into A; bhargodevasya dhimahi is simplified into U, dhiyo yona prachodayat is simplified into uM; A plus U plus uM is AUM or OM.

A Sanyasi should not worry about earning. He was to be dedicated to seeking knowledge and well being of society. In turn, society was supposed to provide for him.

Nivrithi: Pursuit of knowledge.

Yoginaha: means extroverted people not committed to knowledge. Karma Yoga and Sadhanas such as Pancha Maha Yagna govern such active people.

Swamiji will explain Pancha Maha Yagna in a future class.

Shloka # 4:

“Man does not achieve freedom from works by abstention from them. None attains perfection through the mere renunciation of works, either.”

Whatever life style one adopts one has to go through Karma Yoga and then study the scriptures in a systematic manner under a Guru.

In this shloka Sri Krishna tells Arjuna, you should not avoid action. He gives three reasons for this:

Reason # 1: By avoiding or giving up action, you cannot get Moksha. You cannot move away from duties. Running away from problems does not solve it. Our true problem is internal,

although we think it lies outside us.

In this Shloka Naishkaryam and Sidhi both mean Moksha.

In scriptures there are statements that say that by giving up Karma one can get liberation. Sri Krishna clarifies that wherever it says renouncing Karma will get liberation, it should also state that Gyanam should support Karma. Sanyasa works only when it is backed by scriptural studies.

Explaining what scriptural studies mean, Swamiji said, in his ashrama when they were studying the bhaṣyam, some of the Shankaracharya's bhashya was so deep, it took 15 continuous days of studies to complete one mantra.

By mere renunciation, wearing an Ochre robe, one cannot get Moksha. Sanyasa does not guarantee Moksha.

Shloka # 5:

"None indeed , even for a moment , remains without doing work. All, being dependent, are made to work by the constituents of Prakrti."

Reason #2: Giving his second reason for not giving up action, Sri Krishna says, it is impossible to give up action. Everybody will be forced to perform some action based upon his nature. A man cannot give up physical action and even if one does so, your mind will become active. This is because everyone's prakrithi causes him or her to act. Maya has three Gunas that pervade creation. The ornament will reflect the type of gold it is made up of. Thus, we have gold with more silver, lead and copper that reflects in the ornament. Traits of Karanam (cause) will be there in the effect as well. Parents are evident in their children. The three Gunas, Satva, Rajas and Tamas are

present in different proportions in each one of us. The human being is helpless. The most you can do is channelize these energies. People try to stop thought in meditation; Swamiji says this is a mistake. Vedic meditation is more into

directing your mind rather than stopping thought. Any type of meditation that we prescribe involves the appropriate thought. And therefore Sri Krishna says that if you try to give up your action, wherever you go, you will start fresh action. If you become a sanyasi and go to Rishikesh and if you are a rajasic person, your leadership qualities will exert and you will form a sanyasi association. So, even if you renounce action, you will still find action. So, Arjuna, please do what you have to.

Shloka # 6:

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

Reason # 3: The third argument offered by Sri Krishna is that giving up action is very risky and can be counter productive. One can go to Vedanta only after purifying worldly desires. Everybody has got certain natural needs; so they talk about the hierarchy of needs; first the need is for survival; then food and clothing; and thereafter the need is for entertainment; thereafter the need is to be wanted; I want to love someone and I want to be loved by someone. Human mind has different levels of needs including needs for self-respect, doing something in the society, so that the society will remember me.

A person has to go through them and accomplish some self-respect, as they say, to let the ego ripen.

The ego has to ripen before it falls. This can happen only in society and through family life. Sanyasa Marga is a one-way traffic. A grihastha can become a sanyasi; but a sanyasi cannot become a grihastha. That is why Dayananda Swamiji used to tell us; when he went to Uttarakashi, he met many sadhus, sanyasis and he was talking with them. During discussions, Swamiji said: I want to take sanyasa. Many of those sanyasis told him: Do not take that

decision. One of them said: You know, somehow after a fight with my wife, I left and took up sanyasa, because one day my early morning coffee was delayed. And now here, on the first day, Himalayas and Ganges were wonderful and fine and I thought this is the best place to stay for life; but on second day, third day, fourth day, it was the same Ganga, same Himalayas, and if you ask for bhikṣha, the bhikṣha would also be the same; unlike in my house, where it was different every day. Here, you will have have no choice.

A Grihastha cannot become a Brahmachari. If ego has not matured it can miss a lot. If mind is not ready for Sanyasa, it can misfire. It can become a life of Mithyachara. Pressure mounts in mind for pleasures. So it is risky to skip and go to Sanyasashrama.

Take away:

1. It is only by going through life's ups, downs and travails that eventually our ego will ripen and hopefully fall off. Running away from life will not help.
2. Even if you run away, as Swamiji points out, the grass is not greener on the other side. Sanyasa may not help. With Best Wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

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