

is in absolute measure. Such a person is Bhagawan.

Even though I have nothing to accomplish, still I am busy doing my duty as per my Varna and Ashrama. If I can't escape from my duties, how can you?

Shloka #23:

Arjuna said: O Krishna, I do not work tirelessly, men will in all possible ways, tread that path of mine. 3.23

Indeed Arjuna! if at any time, I do not work tirelessly, men will in all possible ways, tread that path of mine.

Here Sri Krishna says: O Arjuna, What will happen if elders are irresponsible? Society wants to follow sheepishly the role models. If role model's are not good, there will be confusion. Violation of harmony occurs at many levels.

If I don't discharge my duties enthusiastically, sincerely, whole heartedly, I am teaching others as well. Whole society is waiting to follow me. If I go wrong it, will affect entire society.

There was a Brahmin who went to Rameshwaram to take a bath. He took along a copper vessel. He was worried it would be stolen. He buried it in the beach sand and erected a Shiva Linga over it as an identifier. Another Brahmin came along saw the Shiv Linga and thought it was custom to erect one. He also erected one. Soon everybody who came erected a Linga. The Brahmin when he came back saw Lingas all over the beach.

The whole world is sheepish. No human being likes to think. So, if children follow you, it is an advantage as well as a disadvantage. You can teach them more by your actions, which is an advantage.

Shloka # 24:

Arjuna said: O Krishna, I do not work tirelessly, men will in all possible ways, tread that path of mine.

If I don't work the worlds will perish; I may cause confusion, and may ruin these living beings.

Here Sri Krishna says, once I violate my Svadharma (Pancha Maha Yagna included), others will also do it. Consequences won't be immediate. Consequences will come slowly, after some time. Even ecological disharmony will not happen immediately. When trees are cut and cars increase on the road the result will deteriorate slowly and sometimes irreversibly. There is in Bombay a phenomenon called the Chembur fog, caused by pollution. People live with it. We will be destroying the creation gradually. Nowadays "natural" food costs more. Many diseases are caused by our unhealthy way of living. If I do not set an example I will destroy by creating confusion in society with respect to their duties.

What should be the basis for choice of a profession? Varnashrama has an answer. All areas such dance, music, etc., must be protected. Shashtra says, when one chooses a profession it should be based upon:

1) One's inclinations or Guna Anusari karma.

Here I will enjoy what I am doing and money is incidental. I look forward to Monday. When I hate what I am doing, I look forward to Friday. Many teachers come for salary without any love for the job. This affects the children.

2) Janma: Based upon caste or birth. If you can't choose based on Guna this is an option. The child is exposed to father's profession at an early age. It is the same with a musician's child. Advantage is all professions are protected.

Shashtra says preference of a profession should preferably not be based on money. In many professions people want less work and more money. Brahmins today have taken to many professions such as those of Vaishya and Kshatriya. Increasingly Brahmins

are walking away from their own profession of learning and teaching Vedas and Sanskrit. If this will continue, both Vedas and Sanskrit will die and with it the religious mantras as well. So, money based preference is not good. Svadharma should be based upon Guna or father's Profession.

Arjuna, your Guna is of a warrior. You are a Kshatriya. So, stand up and fight.

Shloka # 25:

ॐ कर्मणो भक्त्या चोत्तमं कर्मणो भक्त्या चोत्तमं
ॐ कर्मणो भक्त्या चोत्तमं कर्मणो भक्त्या चोत्तमं ३.२५

Prince of Bharatha line! Just as the ignorant work with attachment to that work, so should the wise work, unattached, seeking the world's integration.

Sri Krishna has pointed out that Arjuna and Gyani both should perform Karmas. Their reasons though are different. Agyani wants purity and liberation. Gyani should perform Karma to be a role model to society. If both are performing karma what is the difference in their respective attitudes.

Sri Krishna says, since Agyani has not got liberation, he is not happy with himself. So all his actions are to discover fullness and happiness. In these actions there is anxiety. Everything is done out of incompleteness. Thus, actions are performed because of a lack of wealth, money, children etc. In all actions there is attachment.

A Gyani is one with knowledge. His nature is of fullness and freedom. I am free. Aham Purnaha Asmi. He performs actions with happiness (not for happiness). This is the only difference.

When I do it for happiness, it is a struggle. When I do it in happiness it is a Leela. This is the attitudinal difference.

With Best Wishes,

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

The Pancha Maha Yagya's can be seen from different angles. It is a commandment from Lord. It is like following a traffic rule. Mature people will follow the law, as it is good for society. Citing JFK " Don't ask what your country can do for 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

Baghawat Geeta, Class 12

Greetings All,

Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

Before getting into details of Chapter 2, Swamiji refreshed our memory on the key concepts presented in chapter 1. He says the disease called Samsara plagues mankind. It is an internal and psychological disease. Raga (Likes), Dvesha (Dislikes) and Moha (delusion) characterize this Samsara disease. Often, not understanding the true problem we look to external factors as the root cause (s). Thus, a poor man thinks his poverty is the cause of his problem.

In another example, an unmarried person thinking of marriage to solve his problems sees that his friends with wives all still seem to have problems.

Giving yet another example of a man who while riding a bus heard a noise and thought it was a tire problem. When he asked others in the bus they said they did not hear a noise. He was not convinced. He asked the driver to stop the bus and check the tires. They found the tires were fine. Later the man went

to an Ear Doctor and learned that he had a hearing problem that caused him to hear noises.

Similarly, all our problems are noises of Samsara (Kama, Krodha and Moha) and they are all internal as well. Performing an external adjustment will not work, says Swamiji.

Only a mature person, who has experienced the world, comes to know that the problem is within him. He, however, does not know how to solve it. This is known as Dainya Avastha or the helpless stage. Once he becomes aware of his helplessness he then goes to Sharanagathi or going to an external power to solve the problem. At this stage, Shranagathi, one has to accept and be humble enough to surrender to someone. After Sharnagathi comes the stage of giving the solution and pursuit of spiritual knowledge. This is the Bhagavat Gita stage. So, the four stages of ones evolution are:

1. Discovery of the true problem of Samsara,
2. Reaching a state of helplessness in solving the problem,
3. Seeking the help and advice of some one, Sharanagathi and
4. The Solution to the Samsara problem

Of these four stages, while Arjuna has discovered his problem he has not yet arrived at the helpless stage. He, however, has doubts about his decision. Swamiji says a doubt is better than a wrong decision. At least here there is the possibility of help and a solution. In Chapter #1 Arjuna made a wrong decision. Now he progresses to the doubt stage.

Swamiji says it like progressing from: Tamas>Rajas> Satva.

Shloka # 1:

Arjuna has thrown down his bow and arrow. He has not yet asked Lord Krishna for help. Arjuna's attachment led to his blurred eyes that further obstructed his vision. This was the poignant condition of Arjuna, the Samsari, that Sri Krishna saw.

Kripa in this Shloka means attachment and not compassion. Also, Avishtam means overpowered. A man of compassion is also called a Swami while a man of attachment is called Kami.

Recognizing Arjuna's condition Sri Krishna decides to break the ice. He criticizes Arjuna with strong words so that he could motivate him to get up and fight.

Sri Krishna says, " From where did such a low thought (Kashamalam) come into you. You are known for courage. You have fought many battles before. You have defeated Shiva. How come you are crying in this battlefield at such a critical time of battle? Such dejection can never come to an Arya (noble person). If you are a noble person, do your duty. If you do not do your duty it will give you papam in the next life. In this life, as well, you will live with ill-fame."

Some Clarification:

Arya: Discussing the meaning of the word Arya used in this shloka, Swamiji says, it does not mean people who migrated to Iran to India, nor does it mean fair complexioned people. The Shastric meaning of Arya

includes:

- It is the character that makes a person an Arya, not his birth.
- One who does what has to be done, pleasant or unpleasant. Duty is duty.
- One who is without likes or dislikes.
- One who will not do anything that should not be done.
- One who leads a life of discipline.

Shloka # 3:

Sri Krishna continues: " Hey Arjuna, Kleivyam (unmanliness) does not suit you. You are known for your courage. How can you be frightened? Get away from this weak-heartedness that makes you a disgrace and get up."

Param tapa means scorcher of enemies.

Here Sri Krishna does not teach Arjuna the Gita Gyanam yet. The reason is, Arjuna has not yet surrendered himself to Sri Krishna and as such is not yet ready to listen or receive his teaching. Hence, says Swamiji, it is foolish to give him advice. Sri Krishna knows Arjuna has not yet exhausted his emotions.

Here Swamiji counsels that one should only advise a person who wants it, values it and asks for it. Without asking no advise should be given.

Shloka # 3:

Now Arjuna says: "Oh Madhsudhana, how can I fight Bhishma and Drona who really deserve worship? They are my Gurus."

Shloka # 4:

If Arjuna decides not to fight he will have to go to the forest and live on bhiksha. This is considered a papam. As per Shastras, a Grihasta cannot live on Bhiksha. Only a Brahmachari or Vanaprastha can live on Bhiksha. A Grihasta has to give Bhiksha and not ask for it. Per Arjuna, killing Bhishma is also a papam. Thus, Arjuna has to choose between two papams. Both are bad choices. Here, normally, we humans, try to avoid making a decision. Arjuna, however, chooses to live on bhiksha.

Arjuna says: " If I fight and kill my two Gurus, I may get the kingdom, but Sri Krishna, will I be able to enjoy the pleasures of victory? I will only remember how they struggled and died in battle. Neither in this world or next will I enjoy life after seeing that. Therefore, I am not in favor of this war.

Suggested take away from this class:

Swamiji counsels that one should only advise a person who wants it, values it and asks for it. Without asking no advise

should be given.

With my good wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 10

Arjuna shows the close connection between the institution of family and a dharmic way of life. These are intertwined so closely that when one is affected, the other has an impact and then it spirals into a vicious cycle. If family is destroyed, then dharma is destroyed, and with dharma destroyed, the next generation of the family is destroyed as well.

Vedic teachings have 3 aspects of Dharma:

1. Values of life: like truthfulness, generosity, non-violence, love, concern for others
2. Attitude or basic reverence: towards things and beings ie earth, sun, moon; parents, teachers, and others in the society.
3. Rituals: this is a very important aspect and one that is not appreciated much anymore. A ritual is a concrete expression of the abstract values and is required for communication.

The Vedic religion considers rituals as one of the most important aspects of Dharma because:

- a. Since the first two aspects of Dharma(Values and Attitude) are abstract
- b. Rituals is one of the methods to keep a group together. Every member of a (belonging to the mind) they cannot be

communicated or expressed. Hence “rituals” need to be physicalized/verbalized, making it easier to teach babies/toddlers. To communicate the concept of “respect” to a child, you will have to physicalize it...by symbolizing respect in the form of namaskara.

Friendship/love is also conveyed by verbalization or physical embrace, shaking hands, etc. Psychologists point out that physicalization or verbalization is very important for any relationship. Family takes part in a group ritual. Eat together, pray before a meal etc.

The psychological and sociological benefits of Rituals:

1. Give concrete form to an abstract value
2. Way to communicate the abstract value to the children
3. Maintain the togetherness of a group

Whenever there is reference to “dharma”, these three aspects are of importance: values, attitudes and rituals. The communication of values via rituals vary between religions and even between communities of the same religion. Krishna says that once the ritual part of religion is ignored, then there will be varna sankaraha. The values are universal to all religions. Religions differ only from the stand point of rituals. Varna sankaraha is the immediate consequence of sacrificing rituals. This can occur even in a family where rituals are accepted, a person wants to maintain religion, gets married within the same community, etc. If the rituals diminish in importance and leads to the questioning of the cohesiveness of religion and of community, the consequence of this is varna sankaraha.

No particular religion is needed to follow the attitudes and values – any religion is okay. The religion becomes important only when you value a particular way of performing the ritual. But once rituals are given lesser importance, the next consequence is that the separation of religions and the

segregation of community will go away and this is varna sankaraha. There is another worse consequence of varna sankaraha... disappearance of the family institution. A family institution was required for

1. Vedic Rituals to be followed; a family is not required for Values and Attitudes. A Brahmachari, a vanaprahsta, a sanyasi cannot perform the ritual of giving dakshina nor annadaanam. Only a grihasta can.
2. Fulfillment of artha – wealth, security
3. Fulfillment of kama – enjoyment, pleasures

Once the rituals are not respected, a family institution remains for artha and kama; but with changes in a society, artha and kama will become available without families. The government provides the security and if one has money, all artha and kama can be bought. Values and attitudes don't need a family life. And if artha and kama can be obtained without a family, why is family is needed? A family was required to maintain religion expressed in the form of Vaidika karma. All these are relevant because of karma. Once karma goes away family will be disintegrated. Without a stable family, there will be no karma nor values and attitudes. Who will teach values and attitudes to the next generation? No one will preserve Brahmana dharma – studying of scriptures and propagating it.

Chapter 1 Sloka 42

वर्णसंकरात् कर्मसंन्यासेन वैश्वदेवोऽपि

वैश्वदेवोऽपि कर्मसंन्यासेन वैश्वदेवोऽपि 1.42

confusion of castes for the hell also of the slayers of the family of the family and fall the forefathers verily their deprived of the offerings of riceball and water. Once the varnasankara(intermingling of 4 groups) takes

place, even if mathasankara (religious confusion). The attitude and value of dharma may remain but ritual part of dharma will not remain. Ritual part of religion will have to be given up with varnasankaraha. Rituals are the method of communicating our feeling.

— because of the confusion, this will lead to naraka because all karmas are sacrificed. — naraka for both the victor of the war and for the vanquished, because they will lose all the values for religious practices; not only they fall spiritually but Vedic religion prescribes five fold compulsory rituals for every or Pancha mahayajna: Brahma or Rishi Yajna; Deva Yajna; Pitri Yajna; Bhuta Yajna; Manushya Yajna

pitri yajna — respect to our forefathers; blessing of our forefathers are needed for our material or spiritual growth. All rituals in family is started with Naandi sradha — invocation of the grace of the forefathers. Once dharma goes away — all these rituals will be sacrificed. Forefathers will be deprived of pinda kriya- sradham, udaka kriya-tarpana; lupta deprived of. Forefathers will be deprived of this karma. These days people replace pitri yajna with manushya yajna but it can only be a supplement not a substitution.

the forefathers will fall. In a society where rituals were considered important, Varnashrama dharma had value.

If there are no rituals, varnashrama dharma has no meaning. Morals and attitudes can be practiced without varnashrama dharma. Varnashrama dharma is important only from the perspective of rituals.

परिवारिक धर्म प्रथाओं का विनाश

परिवारिक धर्म प्रथाओं का विनाश 1.43

परिवारिक धर्म प्रथाओं का विनाश (by) these destroyers of the family causing intermingling of castes are destroyed religious rites of the caste family religious rites and eternal. because of these defects in which the ritualistic part of dharma is degraded, responsible for the intermingling of various communities, religion, caste etc casualty is certain practices purely based on varna. According to Veda –certain rites can be done only by some varnas only. Rajasuya yaga can be done only by a raja a brahmana can assist the raja. Vedic rites will have to be given up. within one varna itslef, the vedic practices differ from gothram to gothram a child of mixed varna cannot choose any vedic dharma; Rituals are gone. dharmas from a long time ago, destruction takes one generation

Chapter 1 Sloka 44

परिवारिक धर्म प्रथाओं का विनाश

परिवारिक धर्म प्रथाओं का विनाश 1.44

परिवारिक धर्म प्रथाओं का विनाश whose family religious practices are destroyed of the men 0 Janardana in hell for unknown period dwelling is thus we have heard. Without rituals, the religion can continue with values and attitudes. But for these a family is not required and so after 2 to 3 generations, when it is realized that with money one can obtain artha and kama, the question arises if a family is needed at all. The negative side to not having a family is that you lose the people that you can call your own, those that you can trust and those that give you unconditional love. The psychological anchor or psychological security will be lost. This leads to

sociological disaster when people without the family anchor exist in a society(crimes increase, etc).

Even when alive and after death, w/o family, w/o love and trust, it is like hell; when svadharma is not done(sradha, tarpana), according to vedic rules it is pratyavaya paapam; will lead to narakam. Arjuna says we have heard this repeated in the vedic mantra(not that he has seen).

Chapter 1 Sloka 45

Alas, great sin to do prepared we that by the greed of pleasure of kingdom to kill kinsmen prepared.

Arjuna's monologue continues as he thinks of the current and future repercussions of the MB battle. Alas, a great tragedy indeed; we are about to cause perform a great sinful act; killing all these people which will lead to varna sankaraha, jaathi (family) sankaraha, (ruin) dharma nashaha, (downfall) pitrnaam patanam because of our short-sightedness; we were interested in royal pleasures; due to our misplaced greed for the pleasures

Arjuna has forgotten that this is a fight between dharma and adharma and says we are prepared to kill these people.

Chapter 1 Sloka 46

Alas, great sin to do prepared we that by the greed of pleasure of kingdom to kill kinsmen prepared.

Arjuna if I were me unresisting unarmed
with weapons in hand the sons of
Dhritarashtra in the battle should slay that
of me better would be. Arjuna says I have
decided not to contribute to this tragedy but the beginning of
the war has been signaled by conches. Therefore Duryodana may
start the war but I will not retaliate. I am prepared to die
but will not contribute to the pending chaos of the society.
the kauravas may choose to kill
us we, who have decided not to resist;
we are with out weapons I
consider sacrificing my life for the sake of dharma; I
consider this a good fortune for me to have realized this in
the nick of time.

Having said all these, Arjuna has shown raga, shoka, moha.
Krishna maintains silence. Therefore Sanjaya says...

Chapter 1 Sloka 47

Arjuna

Arjuna said to Krishna

Arjuna said to Krishna 1.47

Arjuna thus having said Arjuna in the
battle on the seat of the chariot sat down
having cast away with arrow bow
with a mind distressed with sorrow.

Sanjaya gives a picture of Arjuna – who symbolizes a maha
samsaari. Arjuna's mind is totally grief
stricken – indicating the problem of raga and shoka;
completely overpowered by attachment and intense grief
– he has thrown away the bow and arrow; For a
kshatriya, the bow and arrow represent fighting
for/establishing dharma, his duty. The physical action of
throwing his bow and arrow represents Arjuna giving up his

Bagawat Geeta Class 6

Namaste!

Summary of Bhagavad Gita class on 12/5/2015:

Verses 14 – 23

Verse 14 – “Thereafter, Krishna and Arjuna, seated in a grand chariot with white horses, blew their divine conches.”

After the Kaurava army signaled their readiness, it is the Pandavas’ turn to signal their readiness. Even though he is not the oldest, Krishna blows his conch first, because he is the most important member of the Pandava army. The focus of the verse is also on the white horses of Arjuna’s chariot. Katha upanishad equates a chariot to the body, the horses to the sense organs and the reins of the chariot to the mind. The white horses of Arjuna’s chariot symbolizes knowledge. The celestial chariot is driven by Madhava, the Lord (dhavaha) of knowledge (Ma).

Verse 15: ” Krishna blew (the conch) Panchajanya, Arjuna (blew) (the conch) devadatta, Bhima, of terrible deeds, (blew) the big conch, paundra.”

Here, Vyasa shows his partiality to the Pandavas. When explaining about their conches he only made a general statement. But with the Pandavas, he names all the conches.

Verse 16: ” King Yudhishthira, the son of Kunti, (blew the conch) anantavijaya. Nakula and Sahadeva (blew the conches) sughosa and manipuspaka.”

Verses 17 & 18: (Sanjaya to Dhrithrastra) ” Oh king! The king of Kasi who is the wielder of a big bow, the great warrior

Sikhandi, Dhrstadyumna, the king of Virata, the unsurpassed Satyaki, king Drupada, the sons of Draupadi, and the mighty Abhimanyu who is the son of Subhadra blew the conches distinctly from all directions”.

Verse 19 : ” Resounding throughout the sky and earth, that tumultuous noise pierced the hearts of the Kauravas.”

With the 19th verse the first phase is over.

Verse 20: (Turning point of the Geeta begins with this verse) “atha” is the word indicating this turning point.

(Sanjaya says)” Oh king! Then, at that moment, when the discharge of the arrows was to be commenced, the monkey-bannered Arjuna saw the Kauravas arrayed, raised the bow, and spoke the following words to Krishna. ”

Swamiji says here that it is worth noting that both the Pandavas and the Kauravas belong to the Kuru family. So both are technically Kauravas. Just as the sons of Pandu are called Pandavas, the official name for Duryodhana’s family is Dhartharashtaraha, meaning sons of Dhrithrashtra. In verse 20, Vyasa uses this official name ” dhartarastran”.

Verses 21 -23: ” Arjuna said- Oh Krishna! Place my chariot between the two armies till I see those who are assembled with a desire to fight. Let me see those with whom I should fight in this event of war. I wish to see those who are assembled here eager to fight, and who want to fulfill the desire of the evil-minded Duryodhana in this war.”

Swamiji says that till this point Arjuna has no sentimental fear of war because he is on the side of dharma.(The war here is not between the families, but between dharma and adharma.)

Once Arjuna gets to the middle of the battlefield, change happens. Sentiments cloud his judgment.

Vedanta is not against sentiments. It is sentiments that make

us human. But when sentiments cloud our intellect, that leads to delusion and then samsara begins.

Regards,

Usha Chandran

Bagawat Geeta, Class 3

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued with his discussion of the invocation prayer called Gitagyana Shloka. Madhusudhana Saraswathi wrote this Shloka. While this shloka was not originally a part of Gita, it is now accepted as one. The Gitagyana Shloka has nine verses. In these Shlokas we are offering namaskara to: Bharathi, Gita/ Saraswathi, Vyasa and Lord Krishna.

Expanding on the Shlokas related to Lord Krishna, Swamiji says:

Shloka # 3:

परीजतामिव द्रुपदो वन्द्यमिदं श्रीकृष्णं ।
सर्वकामार्थसिद्धयैः सर्वत्र नमस्कृतम् ॥

This shola is a namaskara to Sri Krishna. Parijata is a mythical tree in heaven. If one stands under this tree and wishes for something, the tree grants that wish. It is also known as wish yielding tree. Here, Sri Krishna, is compared to the Parijatha tree. Any desire related to Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. he grants, to one who surrenders to him.

Sri Krishna, here is in the role of a charioteer to Arjuna. He does not consider his work as one without dignity. Preaching

dignity of labor, Swamiji says Bhagwan did not feel inferior as a charioteer. Do your work with a good attitude and enthusiasm exhorts Swamiji.

Sri Krishna was the greatest Gyani, reflected in his Chin mudra, the mudra of gyanam. Chin mudra indicates Jivatma and Paramatma Aikyam. It is a threatening finger. This jeevatma is associated with the three fingers. They represent the three Gunas (Rajas, Tamas and Satva) and the three Sharirams (Karana, Sukshma and Sthula). All of them are associated with the perishable body. The thumb represents Paramatama. Only with the thumb can all other fingers function. So also Paramatma is the aadhara, or basis, for the whole creation. JIvatma should get freed from matter and join Paramatma.

The circle or Chakra of Sri Krishna does not have a beginning or an end. When Jivatma merges with Paramatma it becomes Poorna Atma. This wisdom of immortality is presented in the Chin mudra. To this wonderful Lord I present my Namskara. Krishna, explained Swamiji, means one who attracts the devotee.

Sholka # 5:

_____ _
_____ _

This sholka is again a Sri Krishna Namaskara describing his contribution to family, society and the world. Krishna as a son of Vasudeva was a member of the family. As one who destroyed asuras Kamsa and Chanura he was a protector of society. He taught Gita not only to Arjuna but also to posterity. In this role he was a Jagatguru to the world.

Shloka # 6:

_____ _
_____ _

Shloka # 9:

This shloka again is a namskara to Sri Krishna. Krishna is one who is worshipped by Brahma, Varuna, Indira and Marutha. The chanters of the Sama and all Vedas invoke Sri Krishna. The six Angas of Vedas, secondary scriptures, all chant the Lord's name in Paatha, Krama and Ghana Paatha. **Paatha is to recite the mantras in a sentence straight. In Krama Paatha, the first word of the mantra is added to the second, the second to the third, the third to the fourth and so on, until the whole sentence of the mantras is completed. In Ghana Paatha one repeats the mantras in various ways back and forth and in different patterns.**

Swamiji says great Sanyasis, with a one pointed mind, see the lord in their own mind. Devotees see the lord outside. Even though he is described as a person, the Lord is not a person. The personal God has limitations of space and time. The real God is limitless and many people are not aware of him. Thus God has a limited form for devotees and a limitless one as well. To this all pervading God, I bow in namskara.

Ending the Gita Dhyanam, Swamiji prays, May God bless us in our study of this great scripture.

GITA MAHATMYAM. (THE GREATNESS OF GITA).

This glory of the GITA is narrated in VARAHA PURANA Bhudevi(Maha Lakshmi) approached Lord Vishnu and enquired – How , one who is bound with his Prarabdha maintain constant devotion upon You?

The Lord replied that who meditates on Gita will attain that

status.

Lord further asserted that where ever the book GITA is kept, and where ever GITA is studied, that place is considered as sacred as Prayaga&Kasi.

The Lord is present where Gita is studied, chanted or heard.

Gita is My supreme abode, supreme knowledge, and the essence of My indefinable state.

Gita is the essence all the Vedas and Upanishads.

That who recites the entire 18 chapters of Gita with firm devotion attains the knowledge necessary to attain freedom (MOKSHA).

If one recites 9 chapters of Gita, he/she will attain the merit of "GO DHANA) gifting of a Cow.

He who recites a third of Gita will attain the punya equal to a bath in Ganges.

He who recites one sixth will get the fruit of SOMA sacrifice.

If one recites one chapter a day with devotion, he will go to KAILASA.

If one recites one fourth of a chapter or one sloka daily will attain human birth for the duration of MANVANTARA (71 MAHA YUGAS) 308 million YEARS.

He who recites 10,7,5,4,3,2,1 or one half of one sloka will attain CHANDRA LOKA for ten thousand years.

He who leaves this body reading Gita attains salvation.

One while performing the duties of daily life, meditates on the meaning of Gita will attain JEEVAN MUKTHI in this life and VIDEHA MUKTHI when the body falls.

Even a worst criminal if he loves to hear and understand the meaning of Gita will enjoy the bliss of VISHNU.

Those who do not recite this GITA MAHATYAM while studying GITA will not attain this punya.

Bhagawat Gita 1: Introduction

Greetings All,

This is my summary of the first class (October 1, 2015) of Bagawat Gita .

Swamiji introduced the Bhagawat Gita today. He says all human beings pursue goals in life. Some are long term and some are short term in nature. Goals also vary from individual to individual, from time to time, and from age to age. There are infinite numbers of goals that differ by age, by time, and they also change with times. If analyzed, we will note that there are some goals common to all human beings. Even animals have goals but they are instinctive. Thus, these are three common goals:

1. Security, safety and survival related goals. Consequently food and shelter are important goals. Even animals have these goals although they are driven by instinct.
2. The desire to lead a peaceful life, comfortable with myself, is another goal. In search of this goal we go from Ashram to Ashram, says Swamiji.
3. The desire for happiness and fulfillment

Everybody is running after these three goals using different methods. Some think real estate will do it, some think surrounding themselves with people will do it and others think of gold, jobs and so on and on. All these are means of security. Different people seek peace also in different ways.

Swamiji says, our scriptures offer some comments and suggestions regarding these goals. Scriptures say:

1. All three basic needs are available within us.
2. The also say they are within "you" only.

Strangely, Swamiji says, scriptures are telling us that these goals are not available to us outside ourselves. By seeking them outside, the goals will evade you. It will be a misplaced search for something in a place it is not available. So, we should search where it is available. Why do we commit such mistakes asks Swamiji? Why struggle so much? Answering the question he says all these needs within us are hidden. It is hidden under layers of covering. To get to them we need to

remove these layers through a process of "Discovery".

What are these layers? Swamiji says, per scriptures, there are three layers, from gross, subtle to subtlest. They are known as Malam (impurity), Vikshepa (extroverted-ness) and Aavaranam (Ignorance).

Malam: It refers to mental problems. They are six fold in nature:

- 1 Kama – lust
- 2 Krodha – anger
- 3 Lobha – greed
- 4 Moha – delusory emotional attachment or temptation
- 5 Mada or ahankara – pride, hubris
- 6 matsarya – envy, jealousy

Vikshepaha: is mental restlessness, extroverted-ness and all that cause turbulence of mind also called Chanchalam.

Aavaranam: or ignorance that I am the source of all peace and security also called Ananda.

We need to remove the three layers by appropriate Sadhanas or following spiritual disciplines. Each discipline is called Yogaha. Yoga means the seeker unites with his destination. Three yoga's are recommended. They are:

Karma Yoga is for first layer of Malam.

Upasana Yoga is for the second layer of Vikshepa and

Gyana Yoga is for third layer of Agyana Nivrithihi or removal of ignorance.

Karma Yoga is a life style consisting of proper action with proper attitude. It removes all Malam. Proper action is any action that reduces the six Malas. Proper attitude is a healthy attitude towards the proper actions and the results from such action. This attitude will help one grow through any aexperience including a very painful one. Mala Shudhi is also called Chitta Shudhi.

Upasana Yoga consists of forms of meditations. They help quiet one's restless and extrovert mind. It results in Vikshepa Nivriti or a steady mind. It is also called Chitta Nischalathvam.

Gyana Yoga is Enquiry into one's real nature. Do I need peace from outside? Am I ever secure? This self-enquiry and analysis is also called Atma Vichara.

Our scriptures guide us on how to practice these Yoga's. The scriptures are called Vedas. Veda means source of knowledge. Vedas are revelations by Lord himself through Rishis. Vedas are divided into four parts; they are:

1. Mantra Bhaga
2. Samhita Bhaga
3. Brahmana Bhag
4. Upanishad Bhaga.

Brahmana Bhaga deals with Karma Yoga and is also called Karma kanda

Aranyaka Bhaga deals with Upasana Kanda or Vikshepa.

Upanishad deals with Gyana Yoga and is called Gyana Kanda.

Mantra Bhaga or Suktam deals with prayers to Deities. Swamiji says,

Bhagawan's grace is very important in this quest and prayers help us with changing the direction of our mind towards spirituality.

Vedas are a huge literature and include Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharvana Vedas. For many people Vedas are not accessible. So, God has given us a condensed version of all Vedas called Bhagawat Gita. It has 700 verses. It is Veda Sara. It is narrated as a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna. Just a study of Gita will give us the direction we need for life.

This is what we will study next. We will start with Gita Gyana Shloka. While Shankara wrote a commentary on Gita so did Madhu Sudhana Saraswati. Madhu Sudhana Saraswati also wrote the Gita

Gyana Shloka. This invocation prayer offers namaskras to Bharata, Gita/Saraswathi (knowledge), Vyasa (composer) and Lord Krishna (Jagat Guru) in nine verses. Swamiji says, we must start any endeavor with a prayer to ward off any obstacles.

Note: During discussion it was suggested that we check out the site:

www.yogamalika.org It contains Swamiji's lectures on special occasions like New Years.

Discussion Summary, October 18, 2015

Continuing his recap from last week of Mantra 9 in Part 2, Cantos 3, Swamiji reminded us of the prerequisites for realization.

First, we need a human body and then we need to use it wisely towards the goal of realization.

Second, the real meaning of I must be clear to us. In the statement You are That the You does not mean body or mind but it should remind us of the formless Consciousness. Whenever Upanishad says You, it must instantly remind me of the Consciousness. I should always be in this state. Twampada Vichara is essential.

Third, The importance of a sharp, subtle, focused, undistracted and total intellect is essential. Such an intellect is qualified to receive this teaching. Brahman can be known only through intellect. It is the instrument. In some other context Upanishads say intellect is not the instrument

to know Brahman. Clarifying this, Swamiji says the Upanishads are referring to an unprepared mind.

Shankaracharya says, a mind that can listen deeply and absorb the teaching for a length of time is required. Only a proper understanding from a Guru following the Sampradaya illumines the Brahman. The example of a mirror was cited. The mirror must be clean as also the your eyes. So also the qualified intellect combined with knowledge of Shastras will help us "own up to" our own immortality.

Mantra 10:

Swamiji says, in mantras 10 and 11, Yama discusses Yoga Abhyasa or the mental discipline called meditation. This yogic discipline developed by Patanjali, as per Astanga yoga, helps in preparing the mind in its focusing capacity. The culmination of meditation results in Samadhi or Nirvikapla Samadhi or absorption in a chosen field. The object of meditation in this yoga is on Chakras. Swamiji says, Vedanta Shastras do not advocate Chakra meditation. He says meditation is also considered Upana. Thus, here we choose any Devata as object of meditation to develop our Chitta Samadhanam, the focusing faculty.

Swamiji says meditation is not prescribed for Self Knowledge. It cannot provide self-knowledge. It provides Sadhana Chatushtaya Sampathi. Gyana alone can provides knowledge. Mystic experiences also do not have anything to do with knowledge, but it can be accepted. A person can be liberated only by purity, focus and Shastric knowledge.

Swamiji says, Samadhi Yoga is not for liberation; it is for developing deep listening skills. Yoga meditation can help us become absorbed in the Deity of meditation. It helps us focus. It helps us with Drishtaand Adrishta Phalam. In meditation, the five sense organs and mind remain without distraction. The intellect also does not think of anything other than the

object of meditation. It maintains focus. It can be Savikalpa Samadhi (meditation with support of an object) or Nirvikalpa Samadhi (meditation without an object, which leads to knowledge of purusha or consciousness, the subtlest element.) In Nirvikalpa Samadhi, will recedes. It is the highest goal of Yoga.

Mantra 11:

This state of absorption and destination is also called Yoga (the means and the end). The absorption is the end. In this state of Samadhi all sense organs are undistracted, rested and silent for a length of time. Initially focus will be difficult. One should focus his or her attention to avoid distraction. Swamiji says, with increasing sophistication we have lost this faculty. We are now trying to get it back. Meditation (or focus) is subject of arrival and departure. One has to train the mind, and then it will be ready for Vedanta Sravanam.

Swamiji says, often our listening skill is superficial and not very powerful. As such, our knowledge will also be just academic. After Vedanta Sravanam, remembering the teaching during meditation is also Nidhidhyasanam. Nidhidhyasana means to fully internalize and assimilate the teaching . This will make mind deep and with fullest impact of the teaching.

Mantra 12:

Now, Swamiji highlights another important preparation. He says we need to value Sraddha in Nirguna Brahman. Since Brahman cannot be seen, felt, or even logically understood, some think of it as Shunya. Shankara compared it to a man born to a barren woman. Even Philosophers do not accept Nirguna Brahman. Swamiji says, we have to go through the teachings of Shastras, and then we will understand. One cannot objectify Nirguna Brahman, because it

is the very Subject. Describing the Nirguna Brahman, Swamiji says, words cannot convey it, Eyes cannot see it, and mind cannot grasp it. It cannot be grasped, as it is the Grasper. Only by understanding that "I am That", can a believer understand it. So, Sradhda is very important.

Mantra 13:

When one believes, one accepts Brahman is there. As he progresses, he will realize from Brahman "Is" to "I am Brahman". Converting from Is to I AM is the journey.

Thus: Brahman Nasti>Brahman Asti>Brahman Asmi is the journey. Thus, from this journey Satya Bhava Aikyam occurs. So, Sraddha is important.

Suggested Practice:

Consider performing meditation for some time every day. Reflect on the Nirguna Brahman.

Our Meeting With Swamiji

Swami Paramarthananda: September 17, 2015 @ 6pm

Chennai, India

Narayanan took an appointment to meet Swamiji at his residence in Abhiramapuram. It was about 20 minutes visit. Being Ganesh/Pilayar Chaturthi day took some fruits, modak/kozakatai made in the morning and some from abhisekam done at Ganapathi agraharam on August 27.

After offering our namaskaramas, we had few minutes of casual talk introducing ourselves as his students from Chicago.

Thanked him for his lectures. He took interest hearing about our classes and students, he said that he met few of us and blessed us to continue with spiritual studies in whatever format. We mentioned about 15-20 of us attending now, started by Dr. Janakiraman in June 2007. Some of us are continuing and many have joined and some had to leave due to changing situations. Swamiji showed interest knowing about our class format. We told him about our classes on Sundays in the morning at the time the temple opens. His comment was that it is good as other activities take over during the day. He liked the 10 min or so discussion part of our class and notes of lecture summary being prepared and shared among us.

We asked him how his classes are exactly 1-hour duration, how he prepares for it. He said he has been doing it for 30 years now and in the beginning it was not so, when he went longer, he could see that people lose interest and want to get away due to their commitments. So over the years this 1-hour class has come to stay. The first 15 min recap is mainly because the 1 week gap between the classes puts people back into worldly daily chores and it is needed to bring all back to the topic/theme for continuity.

Then we asked what advice he has for us as we continue with the studies and with our personal life phase change. Very quickly within few seconds, his expression was like it is sincere purposeful forward-looking thoughts for us, he started his response: You all are in this spiritual path due to purva punyam, to continue with it follow/practice this: Swamiji referred to Gita Chapter 13, the 20 virtues. Review these constantly and try to practice it in daily activities. Then he referred to Gita Chapter 16 the asuri and daivika sampatti. Asuri does not mean demonic that we think of. These two are materialistic and spiritual paths that bring out these natures in us. Practice slowly getting away from the materialistic things of life. It may not be possible to be 100% non-materialistic, but getting away from it moves us more to the

spiritual side. Then Swamiji mentioned about Gita Chapter 17 (he halted for a second to ask us how far we have read Gita and once we said we went through it at the start of these classes in June 2007, he continued) the 3 gunas discussed Sattvik, Rajas and Tamas for each aspect – worship, tapas, dAnam and food intake. Swamiji asked us to review these consistently and practice the qualities on a daily basis; it helps us to become more spiritual and move away from the materialistic. Swamiji said that this is a kavacham that protects us. Swamiji then said to share with the class; the message/advice is for all of us in our class.