

Bagawad Gita, Class 164: Chapter 12 Summary

Continuing

his teaching Swamiji said, today I will give you a summary of the chapter 12.

It is culmination of mid-section of the Gita, the madhyama shatakam. First six chapters were called prathama shatakam, 7-12 as Madhyama shatakam and 13-18 as charama shatakam.

In

Chapters 7-11, Sri Krishna talked about Ishwara swarupam.

Chapters 1-6, he

discussed Jiva Swarupam. Ishwara swarupam culminates in Bhakti, which is love

and devotion to Ishwara. Love is possible only towards someone you know. You

can never have a positive or negative emotion towards an unknown person. When

you meet an unknown person; your attitude is a neutral; only when you move with

the person and come to know more and more about that person you develop either

liking towards the person or dislike.

This

is process of falling in love. The more the contact is, more one comes to know

and this develops an attitude of love. This happens with God as well. I can't

love an unknown God. One cannot command one to love. I have to give knowledge

and that can create a healthy attitude. Citing example of love for country,

If I want you to develop love towards the country; I have to talk about the glory of the country. You may ask is there any glory at all; that is a different thing; I can never hold an attitude. An attitude is not command-based; an attitude is not will based; an attitude is generated based on your understanding; and Sri Krishna knows this principle. In five chapters Sri Krishna devoted time to giving you the knowledge of God; and now that we know what that God will be; the consequence of that will be a healthy attitude towards the Lord; and that attitude is called bhakthi.

Therefore

Ch.12 is natural culmination of previous five chapters. Although a short chapter of 20 shlokas it is a very important chapter. In this chapter, the entire Vedic teaching has been encapsulated; that is Veda Purva and Veda anta; or it is Veda Sara. Therefore at end of chapter Sri Krishna says it is Veda Sara or Dharmayam.

This

chapter has two topics: 1) Bhakti Yoga and 2) Bhakti Yoga Phalam.

But

before entering the two topics Sri Krishna answers a question posed by Arjuna.

In previous chapter, Ch. 11, Sri Krishna talked about Saguna Ishwara or Vishwa

Rupa Ishwara. Here the world is full of Gunas and hence Saguna. Arjuna had heard of Nirguna Ishwara, so he has a question: between Saguna and Nirguna

Ishwara, which bhakti is superior? Generally we are attracted to Saguna as we

can't experience or conceive of Nirguna Ishwara. So question

is, which dhyanam
is better?

Sri

Krishna gives a peculiar answer. Implication of the answer is not to ask irrelevant questions. He implies that there is no choice. Every seeker requires Saguna bhakti and eventually nirguna Ishwara bhakti as well. Saguna bhakti is the stepping-stone to nirguna dhyanam. Without Nirguna Dhyanam, Saguna dhyanam is incomplete.

One

can postpone nirguna dhyanam but one has to come to nirguna, because nirguna Ishwara is the ultimate reality, which is based on the well-known Keno Upanishad saying: Saguna Ishwara that you meditate upon is never the ultimate reality. You should remember the ultimate reality is a saguna object of meditation. And therefore Krishna's answer is that everybody has to go through both saguna and nirguna bhakti.

Sri

Krishna then he enters bhakti yoga sadhana and its phalam.

Bhakti

yoga is not a particular sadhana but a range of sadhanas and it consist of several levels. In this chapter it is presented as having five stages.

Each

stage is important before going to next one.

First
stage:

Sakama

karma phala karma yoga: Anyone can start in this path. Any karma can be performed to fulfill one's desires. We bring a lot of desires, from our previous lives; some are unfulfilled ones. So let initial life be Yoga Kshema Pradhana. Once I obtain my desire I now need to maintain it. How to convert to Karma yoga? Learn to accept consequences of actions as God's ashirvadam.

Second
stage:

As

a person matures, he realizes that he needs to transfer some of his yoga kshema to Lord.

It

is an important skill that we have to develop; we have to learn to transfer a part of our yoga kshema concern to the Lord. Only then, we will have time, that too quality time and relaxed mind for another set of activity which is meant for chitta shuddhi.

Therefore

the second stage of karma yoga is involvement in those activities, which are meant for chitta shuddhi. **These we call chitta shuddhi pradhana karma, or nishkama karma pradhana karma yoga.** So we do have time to pray to the Lord for the child's examination as well as for giving me chitta

shuddhi.

So in this, I do not ask for yoga; I do not ask for kshema; O Lord whatever you give; I would learn to live with that; And whatever stays with me, I will learn to live with it. It is a very difficult stage; but we have to come to that.

Third
stage:

Ishta

Devata Upasana. In first stage of bhakti, I could not even sit down in

meditation. But here, in third stage, forgetting samsara and its activities one

prays to God. Here mind turns inwards and it is called Abhyasa Yogaha. Ishta

Devata can be any god in any form.

Fourth
Stage:

And once a person has gone through this stage; then he is ready for the fourth stage; I said before in the ishta devatha upasanam; there are advantages; but there are limitations as well and problem is that you may think that there are so many Gods and you may begin to compare; is Shiva greater or Vishnu; idea of division etc. arises; and also the Lord or the deity that I visualize is bound by time and space; that is also another limitation and therefore to break these limitations; I have to learn to look at the Ishta devatha as the very Vishva rupa Ishvara. Visha Rupa Dhyanam gives us chitta shudhi.

Fifth
stage:

After

four stages one becomes sadhana chatushtatya sampan; for it's meaning, I

suggest you refer to tatva bodha. It means one has the required mental preparedness for self-knowledge. This is Gyana Yoga, the final stage of bhakti yoga. Shankaracharya says final level of bhakti is self-enquiry.

It consists of Sravanam, mananam and nidhidhyasanam, for a length of time, on Vedantic scriptures, under a qualified Guru.

So sravanam is the consistent and systematic study of vedantic scriptures; not puranas.

Vedantic scriptures are one's which deal with nirguna Ishvaraha. The first four stages you could manage with saguna Ishvara; in the fifth level you have to come to nirguna Ishvara, which is discussed only in the Vedanta. Therefore, consistent and systematic study of Vedantic scriptures for a length of time, under the guidance of a competent acharya are required.

Sri Krishna himself has said so in the 4th chapter,

Arjuna you have to necessarily go to a guru, and open yourselves and ask for this teaching and consistently follow the sravanam. But what about those people who never had a guru?

Here we are talking about the general rules; but for every general rule there are exceptions, because there are spiritual geniuses. In the case of spiritual genius, a guru is not required; therefore in their case, they gain knowledge in an exceptional way; just as there was Ramanujan, a mathematic genius; he could master mathematics without the help of a

teacher.

When we are talking about general rule; never quote an exception; and every one requires a guru;

Therefore
sravanam from guru is
required.

Then comes the mananam; which is the removal of all the doubts; until my intellect is convinced that the nirguna ishvara is not different from me; the real me; aham brahmasmi. Our intellect will not easily accept it; until we accept, we have to find out what is the intellectual obstacle for accepting this; and whatever be the obstacle in the form of doubt, we have to remove it. It is a long process, we have to go through; which is called mananam; and once a person has gone through sravanam and mananam, he has to go through nidhidhyasanam; by which we mean the assimilation of this teaching; by which we mean repeatedly reminding my higher nature to myself. **Normally, the nature I now know is the lower nature; that I am so and so; born on such and such a date and time; with following qualification; so many years old; whatever your bio-data I give now; they all belong to the incidental ahamkara. I have to remind myself of my higher atma nature; this self-reminder is called Nidhidhyasanam.**

Thus
by following sravanam;
mananam and nidhidhyasanam;
I assimilate this teaching. And once the teaching is assimilated; this intellectual knowledge will bring about an emotional transformation. Because most of our problems are at emotional level; thus we have raga; dvesha; kama; krodha and bhayam; all these are emotional problems.

Samsara is experienced at emotional levels; and therefore this knowledge has to transform my emotional personality. Until then, I continue nidhidhyasanam. And these three sadhanas put together sravanam manana nidhidhyasana is called the fifth level of Gyana yoga.

Now the first four stages belong to Veda Purva.

The fifth stage belongs to Veda anta. Now, these five stages are not clear cut. All sadhanas may be followed with one predominating at a given time.

Shlokas
13-19: Bhakti Yoga Phalam:

When one goes through all five stages of bhakti yoga, one gets the Atma Gyanam that Aham Brahma asmi and Aham Purnaha asmi. Any knowledge removes ignorance. Thus physics knowledge removes physics ignorance. Self-knowledge removes self-ignorance. Gaining of knowledge is experienced at intellectual level while emotional benefits are a corollary. How does removal of ignorance give emotional benefits? The connection is not direct.

Vedanta points out that, purnatavam is our real nature. But, unfortunately, we don't know

this fact, as we are born with ignorance. As we learn more, ignorance goes away. This is true for self-ignorance, as well. When I don't know I am purnaha, I will mistake myself as Apurnaha. Agyanam leads to erroneous conclusion that I am an incomplete person at the intellectual level.

When

I feel I am incomplete, I have desire to become complete. So I struggle to become complete; thus, as a child, I think getting that balloon will complete me. As an adult, I feel, a wife will complete me and so on. Therefore, I go on thinking this will complete me; this will complete me; this will complete me; and the whole life is spent searching for something, which will make my life complete.

This

searching is called Kama. This causes emotional problems; this then shifts problem from intellect to emotion. This causes Krodha, when the desire is unfulfilled; and if it does get fulfilled, it then leads to Lobha, more desire, which again leads to Kama. Thus we are trapped in kama-krodha, moha-mada, matsarya cycle.

In fact all

your emotional problems begin with this kama. And this kama comes up because of the erroneous conclusion that I am apurna.

Kama rises due

to erroneous feeling that I am incomplete at the intellectual level but it manifests itself at emotional level.

Therefore

the root of the problem is at intellectual level; **though the problem is emotional; but the root is intellectual; and therefore you have to study the scriptures and solve the problem at intellectual level; then it will gradually transform your emotional personality;** since I am purnah; I know; I am full and complete; whether things are around or not.

Expectations

are not there; frustrations are not there; complaints are not there; and therefore all the benefits mentioned in this portion are the emotional benefits; but the cause is at the intellectual knowledge. And therefore Sri Krishna enumerates them from shloka No.13 to 19. I am not going to each sloka; but will present in a nutshell;

All

our transactions are from three different levels.

I, as a karta in the world; as the doer of varieties of action; that is one role I play; and the second role I play is **as a bhokta**; receiving varieties of experiences; and the third is **I, as a pramatha**; how I look at the world; my perspective as an observer; And Sri Krishna says at all these three levels; there will be total transformation.

As

a karta; the transformation is that my actions are no more born out of a sense of incompleteness; It is not because I am apurna; I am doing the action with knowledge I am purna; Therefore

all my actions are not meant for fulfillment; but they are done with fulfillment;
and therefore, there is no more any motive; karma phalam if it comes; aham purna; desired karma phalam if it does not come; aham purna; Therefore there is a very great relief; there is no concern; there is no tension. So, therefore, I act from purnatvam; not from apurnatvam; **this is first transformation.**

And when I am full and complete; a mind, which has fullness, will always express only love. Fullness expresses in the form of love and compassion. Therefore all the actions are born out of love and compassion for others. This is **the second transformation.**

And the **third transformation is since the action come from love, compassion without expectation and concern; the quality of the actions are excellent; because the mind is undisturbed; the performance is always better; And therefore every action is appropriate and sound action;**
Thus, as a karta; his motive is not fulfillment; it comes with fulfillment; love, compassion.

Similarly as a bhokta Sri Krishna says: Since he operates from strength that aham purna asmi, he is not vulnerable to disturbances like anger; impulsive reactions etc.; they cannot come; He has got a shock absorber. And, therefore, patience, freedom from impulsive reaction; not being vulnerable

to emotional disturbances are all benefits he gets. In fact, he is an emotionally immunized person as a bhokta; So emotional resistance is the second benefit.

And

the third and final is as a pramatha; as an observer his perspective of

the creation is samatvam. Samatvam: whatever be the type of his experience;

maana apamana, sukha,

dukha; sheetha ushna etc. his mind

enjoys **samatmam or equanimity which**

means he is not subject to raga and dvesha. So these are the transformations, which will take place as a

result of this knowledge; and Sri Krishna concludes by pointing that to obtain

these benefits, there is no shortcut, everyone has to go through all the five stages.

One

has to go through all the five stages to attain this phalam called jeevan

mukthi.

Take away:

Gyani Bhakta, since his

actions come from love, compassion without expectation and concern; the quality

of the actions are excellent; because the mind is undisturbed; the performance

is always better; And therefore every action is appropriate and sound action.

Source of all

problems, Kama:

In fact all your emotional problems begin with this kama. And this kama comes up because of the erroneous conclusion that I am apurna.

Kama rises due to erroneous feeling that I am incomplete at the intellectual level but it manifests itself at emotional level.

Why study scriptures?

Although our problems are emotional; their root is intellectual; and therefore you have to study the scriptures and solve the problem at intellectual level; then it will gradually transform your emotional personality.

Nidhidhyasanam:

Normally, the nature I now know is the lower nature; that I am so and so; born on such and such a date and time; with following qualification; so many years old; whatever your bio-data I give now; they all belong to the incidental ahamkara. I have to remind myself of my higher atma nature; this self-reminder is called Nidhidhyasanam.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Baghavat Geeta, Class 163: Chapter 12, Verses 16 to 20

Shloka # 16:

12.16

He who has no desires, who is pure, who is dextrous, who is impartial, who is free from fear, who has renounced every undertaking-he who is (such) a devotee of Mine is dear to Me.

In the second part of the 12th chapter of the Gita, beginning from the 13th shloka, Sri Krishna talks about the characteristics of the highest bhaktha, the highest bhaktha being one who has gone through all the five levels of bhakthi yoga; and the final level of bhakthi yoga being nothing but Gyana yoga. And therefore the one who has successfully gone through all the five levels of bhakthi yoga will necessarily be a Gyani, who was called an sthira pragyaha in the 2nd chapter. Last, we were discussing the 16th shloka.

Anapekshaha:

he is not emotionally dependent on any external factors; the one who is emotionally self-sufficient; the one who can freely give love to other people; but the one who does not seek love from others; if they love him wonderful; if it is otherwise, their problem; as far as he is concerned, his source of love is himself alone; he has got an UPS system of love; an uninterrupted love supply: ULS.

Suchihi: Similarly he is suchihi; suchihi means a master of his own mind; he does not allow any thoughts to arise, which will disturb his mental health.

Dakshaha: means one who is efficient in all situations. The one who does take appropriate action in every situation. A samsari usually swings between two extreme situations. When there is a problem he gets carried away and acts impulsively; his actions are often unjust and inappropriate; he does not use his discriminative power; the other extreme is whatever be the situation; this person puts up with all the problems that he faces; he allows other people to exploit him; in the name of goodness and compassion.

Vedanta never says: you should allow yourselves to be exploited by others. Vedanta never says you should be a victim of injustice in the name of compassion and forgiveness; it does not advocate putting up with nonsense, inaction and passivity.

So one is, I become a door mat and the other is, I punch everybody's nose; these are the two extremes; one I can call reaction; the other one I call inaction; Vedanta says: reaction is also wrong; inaction is also wrong; what is required is appropriate action; you need not put up with nonsense; but that does not mean that you should impulsively take action; think very well; give enough time; if somebody has committed some wrong action; allow him to defend himself; We have no right to punish another person without asking for an explanation; even the worst criminal is allowed to defend himself in a court, because everybody is innocent unless otherwise proved. Therefore, just because I have got power

over someone, I cannot depend on one sided report and based on one-sided report; I cannot punish another person, I have to enquire; I have to ask and if punishment has to be given, as Sri Krishna tells Arjuna; O Arjuna, Duryodhana requires punishment; you have to give it.

So Daksha means without being carried away by Ragaha and Dveshaha. It is appropriate response unclouded by Raga Dvesha.

Ahimsa should not be abused; abuse of ahimsa is also wrong. If Duryodhana requires punishment, you should give it after proper enquiry; and if Duryodhana can be corrected through non-violent methods that should be tried. Give a chance to a non-violent remedy first; and only when non-violent remedies fail; you have a right to make use of violent remedy and if violent remedy has to be used; you have to use it. And this capacity to think well and without any impulsiveness; taking appropriate action is called dakshatvam.

In last class we also discussed Udasinaha as the one who is always impartial; gathavyathaha; the one who is not concerned about future; and sarvarambhaparityagi; the one who has given up all binding actions is called a parabhaktha. And such a bhaktha is dear to me; all this we saw in last class.

Shloka # 17

12.17

He who does not rejoice, does not fret, does not lament, does not hanker; who gives up good and bad, who is filled with devotion-he is dear to Me.

One who is free from

extreme emotional reactions, (elation and depression) in favorable and unfavorable situations. Sri Krishna says the response should not cloud our intellect. The greatest wealth we (humans) have is Viveka Shakti, discriminative power. Thus when King Dasaratha told Rama he has to go to forest, Lakshmana became violent and furious; his intellect was clouded and he wanted to kill his father. Rama with great effort calmed him down.

One should have awareness as to when my discriminative power is being lost; the feeling I am losing control on myself. We should, then, postpone our response; we need to access our inner space to know I am off -balance.

So that I may take rest; so that when a person is driving the car and he is having some giddiness: they say that if you feel giddy; keep the car on one side; park for sometime; but he must have sufficient self-control to keep the car on one side; if it has gone beyond his control; he gets into accidents. So he does not have that much control to continue driving; but he has got sufficient control; to keep the car on one side; Similarly when I am driving in my life, often we get emotional upheavals but I should have sufficient balance; but now my mind is not sufficiently in control, then let me be careful of what I am talking. If I feel like blasting someone and phoning someone; do not phone up now; if you feel like sending a violent email; postpone it; that much balance if you have; you are master of your mind. Nobody says you should be free from emotional disturbance; Sri Krishna only says be aware of it when it comes and learn to be careful; and that is called not being carried away by harsha and shokha.

Similarly,

na dveshti na kankshiti; na dveshti means freedom from dvesha; na kankshiti means freedom from ragaha. So na dveshti; na kankshiti means freedom from binding raga dvesha; freedom from binding expectations; Here also we should be careful; Nobody can be totally free from expectations; everybody has expectations; such as what I would get through my business; and how my children should grow up; and what my health should be in my old age; we all have expectations; it is natural. Sri Krishna himself tells in the 4th chapter; that Raga Dvesha is natural.

You

can easily see raga dvesha playing out when you go to a buffet lunch or dinner.

Varieties of dishes are there; and everybody is given a plate, each one rushes

to his own raga dvesha; one straight

away goes to gulabjamun; another goes to roti; another goes to idli; another

goes to bun; another goes to something. In fact, even Gods have Raga Dvesha as

seen by their preference for their favorite foods such as Payasam, Vada etc.

That means gods also have ragaha. Therefore Vedanta says: have expectations; but be prepared for their fulfillment as well as their non-fulfillment; because only you can plan for the future; you can contribute to your future; but you cannot control your future; And since future is not under your control; you should be prepared for the non-fulfillment of the expectation. That is why we have a well-known saying: Hope for

the best and be prepared for the worst. This farsightedness, this mental preparedness, this is a shock absorber. Having that quality is here referred to as: na dveshti na kankshati. So he is free from binding raga dvesha.

Shubhashubhparityagi:

One

who has given up punyam and papam. shubham means punyam and ashubham means

papam because from vedantic angle; punyam and papam both are bondages only; no

doubt punyam will give svargaloka phalam; higher lokas and enjoyment. But even

that is considered to be bondage.

Since punyam is finite in nature; after sometime it will get exhausted; leaving us high and dry; so we say punyam is a golden shackle while papam is an iron shackle; both are shackles. It does not mean one should not perform punya karmas. They should be performed for Chitta shudhi, Gyanam and Nishta.

Such

a bhaktiman is dear to me, says Sri Krishna.

Shloka # 18:

12.18 He who is the same towards friend and foe, and so also in honor and dishonor; who is the same under cold, heat, happiness and sorrow, who is free from attachment to everything.

Shatrau mitre ca samaha: One who has the same attitude to friend and foe. A Gyani does not have any enemy. Hence Dharmaputra was called Ajatashatru.

Thus

there are two sets of people; some look upon the Gyani as their friend; and

some look upon Gyani as their enemy; and the friendly people may do favourable

things for Gyani; and the inimical people may harm the Gyani.

And whatever be

their responses or action; Gyani's response is samah. And what do

you mean by samatvam; Gyani does not develop raga or dvesha towards them; He does not hate a person

who is inimical to him; and he does not get attached to a person just because

the other person is friendly.

Then does that mean that the Gyani will put up with the nonsensical action of the enemy. Even though Gyani does not have dvesha towards an inimical person; it does not mean that the Gyani should put up with his wrong actions. So Gyani will strongly criticize an action which is to be condemned; and if an appropriate step should be taken, he will take, but even the worst step is taken; without even an iota of dvesha in his mind; The aim is not the other person should suffer; the aim is not in suffering; but the aim is that the other person has to be corrected. In fact, he feels bad that he has to correct him through violent methods. Remember the example of a mother punishing a child, Mother is never going to happily punish; even when she punishes in the heart, love alone is there.

Tatha manapamanayoh:

And

that is why when the Lord kills the asuras; they generally use the word mokshaha; instead of

vadham; thus we have puthana

moksha. What is the

idea conveyed; moksha

means

through punishment, the Lord is removing the impurity of those people; moksha does not mean vedantic moksha; just because Lord kills puthana, puthana will not get moksha. Remember, puthana will get moksha only through atma gyanam; there moksha means freedom from that papam because Bhagavan does that with compassion and love and not with a tinge of retaliation, hate or anger in mind.

Manapamanayo:

One who is equanimous even during honor or dishonor. As honor goes higher so does dishonor; both are not under our control. Even Gods faced Apamana.

Similarly, one who is equanimous with respect to manam, honor and dishonor. This is another problem: wherever honor comes; there is a possibility of dishonor also. And when you are an ordinary person, dishonor will not be felt very much; but when the honour goes higher and higher; the dishonor also becomes more intense; And whether you like or not; honor and dishonor are not under our control; So any person can spread stories; and any person can cavil; and I cannot shut the mouth of other people. Thus Rama faced apamana; Seetha faced apamana; Sri Krishna faced apamana. Even Gods have faced apamana; therefore we can never totally avoid that; and therefore we have to be mentally prepared. And the one who swallows both of them; honor and dishonor and yet maintains his equanimity is a parabhakta.

Shitosnasukhadukheshu: One who treats heat and cold, sorrow and joy, all pairs of opposites (gain/loss, union/separation) all with equanimity; knowing life is a series of Dvanda, one who

accepts dvanda
samaha.

And

therefore the one who is samaha;
the one who has got Gyanam as a shock absorber. And until
Gyanam comes, the
only shock absorber is ishta
devatha bhakthi; only
our devotion to god in one form or the other. That alone has
to strengthen us
until Gyanam comes; so these are the two shock absorbers; for
the human beings.

This Parabhakta has Gyanam for a shock absorber.

Sama sangavivarjitaha:

Since he knows pairs of opposites come and go, when situation
is favorable, he enjoys it, remembering it will go away at any
moment. He takes everything as God's gift, remembering God may
take it away at any point. This state of mind is called
asangatvam; enjoyment without attachment.

Shloka # 19:

**12.19 The person to whom denunciation and
praise are the same, who is silent, content with anything,
homeless,
steady-minded, and full of devotion is dear to Me.**

Tulyanindastuti: Criticism and glorification: are at level of
words, while mana apamana are level of action. So ninda means
criticism; censure; stutih means glorification. Previously
mana and apamana were talked about; they are at the level of
action. Here ninda and stuti are at the level of words; so
mana apamana is kayikam; ninda stuti is vachikam; Why is mana
and apamana, kayika; say, in a function somebody brings the
garland and you stretch your head and they say it is not for
you and honor the neighboring person. Therefore mana comes;

apamana also comes.

So that is at the action level; this is at the vak level; this also you cannot avoid because whatever you do; there will be somebody who criticizes. Any blessed thing you do; there will be somebody to criticize because criticism does not involve any expenditure; We have a free mouth and it is a free country; And therefore if there are people who are willing to advise you with good intentions, they will directly tell you; and whatever I can learn from others, I learn; and I perform actions according to my common sense and I completely ignore others' comments.

If

there are some people passing comments on me and enjoying, I am very happy; because indirectly I am becoming a cause for others enjoyment; there are people who are spending lot of money to please other people in the society. Now here I am without spending any money I am giving happiness to others; how; by being a victim of their criticism; therefore by commenting upon me, if they get happiness; I am happy only; I should not be upset by their comments.

Santushto yena kenacit; his mind is

such that it can be very easily pleased; the uniqueness of Gyani's mind is, it is an easily please-able mind; whereas the more the sophisticated the mind is; pleasing those people becomes very difficult; because they are so fastidious and so particular about everything; The more sophisticated one is; we have brought finer raga dvesha; the finer our raga dvesha; the more difficult it is to please.

And the most of the perfectionist people; perfectionist here means they are very particular about everything; perfectionism is wonderful; they have clear ideas about how things should be. To have that is wonderful; but the problem is, if I am going to be disturbed by the slightest variation; my life becomes miserable; You can see perfectionists are generally irritated; they are never happy whatever you do; Anything you do; he is not happy; **Gyani is a perfectionist; he does everything properly, at the same time, he is accommodative enough to put up with all the imperfections;** And therefore the one who is happy with anything that comes.

Aniketaha; this is the word which indicates that he is a sanyasi; aniketaha means the one who does not have a house of his own; one who is not a householder; niketa means house; and aniketa means the one who is a sanyasi. And then where does he live; wherever, whoever gives a place, he stays; that place may be a palatial house or it can be an ordinary hut; whatever is available, he lives there; Therefore aniketaha.

How does he enjoy such a mind; his mental strength he has derived from one source. It is sthiramatiha; it is self-knowledge that has given him this mental strength. Remember; knowledge is power.

In fact, knowledge alone is power. If at all humanity is so powerful; it is only because of our knowledge; And among various types of knowledge; self knowledge is the most powerful thing; The greatest strength you derive, is from self-knowledge; so sthiramatiha means the one who has got doubtless knowledge.

It is the doubtless knowledge of aham brahma asmi; and such a Gyani is dear to Me. So with this shloka, Sri Krishna

concludes the description of a wise person's conduct or characteristic. Now in the 20th shloka, Sri Krishna winds up this chapter.

Shloka # 20:

When

we hear such a description of Gyani, we all want to be such a person; it is

alluring. How can I attain such a state of mind? One has to go through five

levels of Bhakti yoga to reach this state of Gyanam.

Suppose

a seeker goes through all five levels of Bhakti yoga; and the **five levels of bhakthi yoga are sakama karma pradhana karma yoga; nishkama karma pradhana karma yoga; eka rupa Ishvara upasana; anekarupa Ishvara upasana; nirguna Ishvara Gyanam;** So these are

the five stages; the first two stages are called karma yoga; the next

two stages are called upasana

yoga; the last stage

is called Gyana yoga.

In short, karma yoga

plus upasana yoga plus Gyana yoga.

This

bhakti yoga leads to immortality. It is a teaching in keeping with the Vedas,

the primary source of knowledge. A Nastika is one who is outside of Vedic

tradition. Gautama Budha was one such example. Buddhism rejected Vedas and it

in turn was rejected by India. So every Acharya follows Vedic tradition. Sri Krishna

also says, I am also following the Vedic tradition called here Dharmyam. Hence

Gita is called Smriti; one that goes along with Vedas. It has Me as the ultimate goal. May he become the greatest Bhakta.

Take away:

Gyani is perfectionist; he does everything properly, at the same time, he is accommodative enough to put up with all the imperfections.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Baghawad Geeta, Class 162: Chapter 12, Verses 15 & 16

Shloka # 15:

12.14

He who is ever content, who is a yogi, who has self-control, who has firm conviction, who has dedicated his mind and intellect to Me-he who is such a devotee of Mine is dear to Me.

Continuing his teachings, Swamiji said, after talking about five stages of Bhakti yoga, now Sri Krishna is talking about a person who has successfully gone through all stages of Bhakti Yoga; such a person is known as Parabhakta, Advaita Bhakta, or Gyani bhakta. A bhakta at the highest level is necessarily a Gyani.

He believes Lord in his original nature is not away from me; and in fact, is not different from me in my original nature.

And because of this wisdom; and this advaita bhakthi; this person enjoys a particular benefit or phalam, which the scriptures call jivan mukthi or moksha. This benefit is not promised only after death, rather it is promised here and now. This benefit is at a mental level. No miraculous powers or sidhi's are promised as a benefit. **A Jivan mukta is one whose mind is free of regular emotional disturbances.**

What are these regular emotional disturbances that makes one a Samsari?

And what are the regular emotional disturbances which everyone goes through; which we put together and call samsara. They are nothing but samsara, basic self-inadequacy. **Not being happy with the present as I am; leading to krodha; leading to lobha; leading to moha; leading to mada, matsarya. These are all the permanent disturbances, which afflict us all during the waking hours.** And therefore Sri Krishna defines moksha as freedom from these fundamental mental problems, fundamental problems. And that is enumerated in the fifteenth shloka, which we saw in the last class.

Sri Krishna mentioned four of the fundamental and chronic mental

disturbances that we suffer from; they are harsha, amarsha, bhaya and udvegaha. This constant fluctuation of emotions; at one time, I am very hyped; I am extremely elated (harsha) and at another time, I am at the bottom of the world; amarsha; So, therefore, this constant emotional swings, up and down, if this happens, according to my will and plan, it is an enjoyable game. But all these are happening, not within my control; I have to helplessly go through such a situation, and that is called samsara.

Amarsha means intolerance.

I can't accept success of opposite party. Decency in failure is difficult. I am not able to accept better situation of another person, a competitor. When another succeeds, I don't like it. I always find something to put him down.

This envy is amarsha. There is no remedy for jealousy. Even Swamiji's suffer from this; thus one says, I have 100 devotees while another has 110 devotees. **To put jealousy down and admire goodness in another is a great quality.** Citing a Doctor's joke: a patient came to see a doctor and said I have got this problem; however, I went to that particular doctor first; someone whom this this doctor considers an enemy; he is a foolish doctor; what advice did he give you; patient said, he asked me to come to you.

Musicians can't accept other musicians' success. So moksha is freedom from jealousy. You see goodness

in all. Capacity to admire and have a good word for everyone is a great quality.

Bhrthari

says, with a magnifying glass (convex lens), a noble person looks at the good quality of others and their minus points, he sees with a concave lens. We also have both these lenses; but the problem is we use concave lens to see good virtues of others while using a convex lens to see their drawbacks; thus drawbacks are magnified while good qualities are muted. This is called samsara; and therefore he is one who is free of elation as well as envy.

He is free from Bhayam or innate fear. Fear and insecurity, all start in childhood and continues into old age until the last moment. Brthahari says, the fear is because we hold on to wrong things and most of the things we hold on to, cause one form of fear or the other. And he gives a list of things which we generally hold on to; and how they all cause fear.

Bhoge rogabhayam: Problems caused by sense pleasures in life.

If you enjoy sense pleasures it will lead to physical problems. Generally all things you like; are not good for you, while things you don't like are usually good for you.

Kule cyutibhayam

Being proud of family lineage (kula) also causes fear. I am afraid that my children may not protect family name. In Indian society, this matters. Prestige is very important; we are always worried about what others think about us. Such rumors, about family falling from grace, also spreads quickly.

Vitte nrpaladbhayam: Fear of tax due to too much money. Having plenty of money is also a cause of fear, as I fear the taxman. I always find ways to keep money.

Mane dainyabhayam: Fear of dishonor.

Fame is enjoyable, however, the more I am honored the more I am worried about dishonor. Here one can even be blackmailed.

Bale ripubhayam:

Fear of rival king.

If I am a King with a large army, I am always afraid of rival kings; fear of rivals, in general. This can be true in office politics as well.

Rupe jaraya bhayam: Fear for my beautiful body.

If I love the beauty of my body it is also a cause of fear. To such people old age is the biggest fear, as old age will deform your body. Therefore all those things used to cover up wrinkles; such as talcum powder; somebody defined powder as that which will not allow the

other people read between lines; reading between lines; means your age.

Shastre

vadibhayam:

Fear of challengers.

When I am committed to sciences, I am afraid of people who are challengers of my theories.

Gune khalabhayam:

If I am dharmic person, unfortunately majority are not interested in Dharma, they laugh at you and put you down. When one wears Kukum or one wears Vibhuti, one is teased. Children especially face peer pressure in this scenario. Going forward becomes an uphill task for me.

Kaye krtantadbhayam:

If I am attached to the physical body, then my fear is from death; that can come at any time.

Brthahri says anything you hold on to causes fear. He says the only solution to such a fear is Vairagyam.

Learn to depend on yourself. Don't throw the world away; enjoy it so long as it is available, but don't lean on the world.

In Chapter 2 we talked about a man with a stick. One man uses a baton during his walk; he does not depend on it; it is just for style. Another uses a stick, but he leans on it;

if the stick falls, he also will fall.

Udvegaha:

Means mental disturbance, sorrow or anxiety; all caused by Amarsha, Bhayam etc. One who is free from all these things is a Parabhakta.

And how did this Gyani achieve that. Sri Krishna does not mention that here; but it is a very gradual process; as I have said the seventh chapter, the travel is gradually from world dependence to God dependence to self-dependence; First learn to switch the dependence from the world to God; which is a better and safer dependence, because all the other things are subject to end; but not God. And thereafter I discover that Lord in myself; and once I discover the Lord in myself; God dependence will become equal to self-dependence. And self-dependence is independence. So therefore mukthaha is a person dearest to me.

Shloka # 16:

12.16

He who has no desires, who is pure, who is dextrous, who is impartial, who is free from fear, who has renounced every undertaking-he who is (such) a devotee of Mine is dear to Me.

Continuing the qualities of a Gyani Bhakta:

Anapekshah: free from expectations

One who is not emotionally dependent on external factors to be happy; he has no expectations. **Dependence expresses as expectations. Freedom from dependence means freedom from expectations and as**

**such freedom
from disappointments as well.**

So true freedom is freedom from expectations.

Even expecting some body to
behave in a particular manner is an expectation.

Shastras say, if you want
to have expectations at all then accept whatever comes,
welcome them. Have
non-binding expectations. This way, whether they are fulfilled
or not, either
way I am happy.

Therefore
develop the mental strength to hope for the best and be
prepared for the worst.

Citing an example: So this person failed in CA for 28th time
and he came out

and there was this board on the road outside: Jesus Never
Fails: and this man

wrote underneath; Let him try CA. So frustrated he was; he got
angry with Jesus

also; so also Shastra
says

what: but after a few minutes, we should be able to ask: so
what; I will try

again; I will change; there is always one way or another; this
resilience of

the mind is what is required. Not that we should be totally
free from

disappointment; disappointments are natural; but the capacity
to come out of it

is inner strength. And therefore anapeksha means one who is
free from all

expectations; or one who is free from binding expectations.

Shuchihi: Cleanliness.

One who is clean internally (mentally) and externally.

Udasinaha:

literal meaning is, Indifferent. One who is not partial, an impartial person; does not belong to any group. One who belongs to everyone.

Gatavyathaha: Free from sorrow.

One who is free from sorrow. He knows he can't control his experiences as Desha, Kala and Prarabhdha determine them. Prarabhdha can bring favorable and unfavorable situations. Vedanta can't change the world.

It helps in developing a healthy attitude towards a situation.

Any experience

that I obtain is God's gift for my growth. Our ultimate goal is spiritual

growth. Life is similar to seeds; different seeds require different conditions

to grow; so also we require different experiences to grow.

Ishwara especially

chooses every experience for me; He is one who does not know injustice. It may

appear as unjust due to my limited vision. Let me not pass judgment. So whatever

experience God gives me I have to learn from it.

And

therefore my question is: why people are behaving like that is not the question;

Why death happens is not the question; why robbery happens is not the question;

why people leave me is not the question. My question is: from such an

experience what spiritual lesson have I to learn? And when I ask this question; I will find that it is from tragic experiences only that we really we learn more.

Even Arjuna learned he needs the Gita, only when he was faced with the prospect of killing his Kith and kin. Every sorrow is a spiritual sadhana. I am willing to learn spiritual lessons. and therefore from Gyani's angle, no experience is unwelcome; he welcomes all experiences; Therefore gatavyathaha is one who is free from negative reactions such as, "Why me?"

Sarvarambhaparityagi: One who has given up binding actions.

What are the binding actions? Any action that you do thinking that once the action becomes successful my life will become complete; once that karma produces

successful result; my life would become poorna. With this attitude; for the sake of purnatvam; when you perform any karma, it is a binding karma; no karma or karma phalam can really give purnatvam.

No karmaphalam can give purnatvam. Action is finite, result is finite, I am finite and so it can't give infinite purnatvam.

One success will lead to more actions; I become a workaholic. Therefore, life becomes a

struggle or

bondage. Gyani understands this fact. His actions come out of fulfillment, not for fulfillment. Ventures may succeed or fail; I am still full.

So

I am purnah; and I am taking up a new venture; and as even I am taking up a venture; I am purnah; the venture may succeed; I am purnah; the venture may fail;

I

am purnah; **So purnatvam becomes a way of life; it is no more a destination of life; purnatvam as destination makes the life miserable; purnatvam as a way of life makes life a leela;** thus Gyani enjoys doing things; sarvarambhaparityagi; and such a devotee of mine; he is dearest to me.

Take away:

A Jivan mukta is one whose mind is free of regular emotional disturbances.

Not

being happy with the present as I am; leads to krodha; leading to lobha; leading to moha; leading to mada, matsarya. These are all the permanent disturbances, which afflict us all during the waking hours.

To put jealousy down and admire goodness in another is a great quality.

Dependence expresses as

expectations. Freedom from dependence means freedom from expectations and as such freedom from disappointments as well.

So true freedom is freedom from expectations.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bhagawad Geeta Class 161: Chapter 12, Verses 14 and 15

Shloka # 14:

12.14 He who is ever content, who is a yogi, who has self-control, who has firm conviction, who has dedicated his mind and intellect to Me-he who is such a devotee of Mine is dear to Me.

Continuing his teachings,

Swamiji said, in second part of Chapter # 12, beginning with shloka # 12, Sri

Krishna is talking of characteristics of the highest Bhakta.

He has gone

through all five levels of Bhakti Yoga and as such he will necessarily be a

Gyani; such a Gyani is also called a Sthita Pragya or a Parabhakta. So, what

are the characteristics of such a Parabhakta?

Shloka # 14 tells us, that this bhakta, who is a Gyani, has

understood that I am not different from the purna Ishvaraha; if the Lord is purnaha, the infinite one, that purna Ishvara cannot be away from me; because the purna Ishvara, without me will become apurnah; because the infinite should include everything. And therefore, the ultimate knowledge is that Purna Ishvara is not away from me; purna Ishvaraha is not different from me. In short, I am purna Ishvaraha. Purnaha means satyam anandam anantham. And when I discover the fact that I am purnaha, I do not lack in life; I do not miss anything in life; I never suffer from the problem of self-inadequacy. I can sing the well-known Tamil Song, kurai ondrum illai. It is not a mere verbal expression; but I can tell from my own inner heart; I do not lack anything in life; I do not miss anything in life.

And

as long as I lack something or miss something, I cannot keep quiet and I will become restless. **And therefore there is a constant struggle to make myself complete.** And this struggle will continue eternally, until I discover that I do not lack anything; and in the case of the Gyani, he has discovered the fact I do not miss anything. This is the idea conveyed here in the word santushtaha; in Sanskrit it is samyak santushtaha. I do not miss anything in life.

Now, consider for a moment, if God suddenly appears in life in front of me and asks, "what do you miss in life; so that I can give that and you can die peacefully"; at that moment, in our mind, hundreds of things come up; I do not have a son; I do not have a daughter; I do not have a grand child; I do not have this; And then comes I do not have a good body; then I do not

have a good hair; I do not have a good nose; I do not have hair at all; later; so many things are lacking; such as, physical lack, emotional lack; intellectual lack.

Lacking of things appears in three fold forms. As Sharirika apurnatvam; which means I am not satisfied physically in terms of height, weight, complexion etc.

Then there is emotional lack; my son does not talk to me everyday from Washington DC; nobody talks to me; nobody asks me How are you; I have got cold for the last three days; and I want people to enquire.

And then comes intellectual lack.

There are many basic questions for which I do not have answers; the fundamental question being why at all did Bhagavan create this world?

So, thus santushaha means I do not lack anything physically, emotionally and intellectually. I am ever free from all lack or want; and that does not mean such a person should not be active in the world. Such a contended Gyani can also be active, but the activity is not born out of incompleteness. When the activity is born out of incompleteness; it is called a struggle; life becomes a drag; life becomes a burden; life becomes a struggle. **What is the**

definition of struggle? It is any activity that you perform that is backed by a sense of incompleteness; whereas in the case of a Gyani;

as Sri Krishna says in the third chapter, it is not as if he sits in a cave, he is also active just like other people. He is involved in activities; perhaps he is busier more so than a samsari; but the difference is the activities do not come from a wanting mind; an incomplete mind.

Therefore

his activities are not at all a struggle; such activities are called the leela;

Gyani's activities are called leela; Agyani's activities are called struggle; And therefore satatam santushtaha.

And yogi, I told you in the last class, is a Gyani, the one who has accomplished the knowledge, which is the ultimate yoga. Yoga, literally means, that which combines two things, the jivatma, the seeker, and paramatma, the sought, these two are brought together by yoga. Thus, Karma yoga, Upasana yoga; all of them help, but it is Gyana Yoga that brings them together as it reveals that I and God are always one.

Yatatma: Body, mind, sense

organs are called Atma here. They are well controlled. He is one who controls

the body, rather than being controlled by the body. He has self-discipline.

And for this self-discipline alone, we have got a special science called the ashtanga yoga of Patanjali; it is a beautifully defined system; which takes care of our Character, through yama and niyama; I have talked about this in my introduction to the sixth chapter; yama, niyama takes care of

my character integration; asana takes care of my physical integration; pranayama takes care of my energy integration; prathyahara takes care of my sense organ's integration; dharana dhyana samadhi takes care of my mental integration. Thus, discipline and integration at all the levels, is accomplished by ashtanga yoga; and through that; this person has become yatatma; an integrated person.

This self-integration is required before coming to Vedanta and it is also known as Sadhana Chatushtaya Sampathi.

Sravanam requires integration (concentration); nidhidhyasanam also requires integration. A man or woman, need a lot of concentration to be able to perform things. And therefore self-discipline is required life long; and a man or woman without self-discipline cannot accomplish anything. Even reading a simple article in a magazine is difficult for some people, as they do not have concentration. Therefore, this person is yatatma, before as well as, later.

Dridhanischaya means Sthira Pragyaha, or one with knowledge arising out of conviction. Hence, in Vedanta, one listens to teaching without any questions; no questions are to be asked at the Sravanam stage. As you listen, more and more, all doubts are resolved. **Once you complete listening you start Mananam; here you eliminate doubts.** It clears intellectual doubts. I ask questions and clear the doubt until I am convinced. This gives rise to conviction. Without Vedantic knowledge and a firm conviction

in it, there will
be a distance between God and Bhakta.

Next quality of Para bhakti
is Mayyarpitamanobudhi; one whose mind is fixed in Me.

I have told before; our appreciation of the Lord takes place
at three levels; initially God is eka rupa
Ishvara as a person who
is the creator of the world; and therefore I call him Ishta
devatha Ishvaraha. Then, there
is further elevation; I learn to look upon God as not only the
creator; but as
the very cause, which has
manifested
in the form of universe and therefore as Vishva Rupa Ishvaraha
which is the next
level;
and
the final level is the Arupa
Ishvaraha. I also said, the
Lord does not become the
world;
rather the Lord appears as the world.

An important thing to note
here is that higher levels of Bhakti don't displace or destroy
lower levels of
Bhakti. A Gyani has knowledge of Arupa Ishwara but he still
worships God with
form. Thus, advaitam cannot destroy dvaitam. One Acharya said,
more than
others, an Advaitin can enjoy enhanced Dvaita Bhakti.

An
advaitain never loses his Ishta
devatha bhakthi and
therefore he has got now two channels; or even three channels;

eka rupa channel; aneka rupa channel;and
arupa channel. So
when he is in a temple or in front of the deity; he enjoys
ekarupa channel; and
when he travels around in Badrinath, Kedarnath, Himalayas,
Ganges, and enjoys
the wonderful flowers; he sees in nature the Vishvarupa
Ishvaraha; and then he
closes his eyes and enjoys aham brahmasmi; the Arupa
Ishvara.

So, when he has emotional needs his personal God is ideal;
when there is emotional need; personal relationship is always
ideal, because when we have emotional
problems one always would like to pour out in front of
someone; this was the
advantage of joint family where there was somebody to whom you
could go to. Nowadays
without a joint family anymore, one has no place to go and
this causes
problems.

So personal relationship; Psychological
relationship is very important and the Ishta devatha provides
this back up relationship; thus, you can always cry in front
of Rama; Thyagaraja did; Mira did; and all
bhakthas did; and advaitins can also do that. Even
Shankaracharya does that in Shivananda
lahari; he is pouring out as an individual person; and that is
called the
surrender of the mind at the feet of the Lord, Ishta Devata
Bhakti.

But
there are times when our emotional personality lies low; but
it is the
intellectual personality that is dominant and therefore it
begins to ask rational

questions about God. Then personal God often does not satisfy when we have questions as to why God created world with lot of deficiencies; So when intellect is dominant; then we have to know the real nature of God; God as the absolute reality; which does not have any form; but which is the substratum of all the forms. Therefore when the intellect is dominant; we have got nirgunam brahma; and when the mind; emotional personality is dominant; we have got saguna Ishvara; Thus, we keep shifting between saguna and nirguna; says Shankaracharya.

And therefore Sri Krishna says mayyarpitamanobuddhi; the one whose emotional personality and the one whose rational-intellect, questioning-intellect; both of them are at the feet of the Lord.

Moreover,
Ishta devatha bhakthi;
devotion towards personal God is always developed through puranas alone; for that we have sravanam, kirthanam; smaranam; pada sevanam; archanam, vandanam, dasyam; sakyam atma nivedanam. Gods are presented as avathara's and their leela's are described and the more you read, that particular aspect of the Lord becomes more and more solid and concrete for you. As I have often said for Thyagaraja, the idol was not a piece of inert matter; and that is why he was shattered when he lost it;

Such a devotee who has the appreciation of eka rupa and aneka rupa and arupa Ishvaraha, that person is dearest to me. In fact, dearest is not the

word, he is Me.

So Saguna and Nirguna
Devatas are both important.

Shloka # 15:

12.14

**He who is ever content, who is a yogi, who has self-control,
who has firm
conviction, who has dedicated his mind and intellect to Me-he
who is such a
devotee of Mine is dear to Me.**

There are two types of
people.

1. Ones with rock
like heart. Whatever experience he obtains, he is not
affected by them. It is
great to have such a heart.

During upanayanam
ceremony the man stands on a rock and the priest blesses him
with a strong
heart. A girl also goes through similar ceremony during her
wedding so that she
has a rock like heart; as she has to adapt to a new family and
new people; such
a person is not hurt easily; but unfortunately, they keep
hurting sensitive
persons.

- Tender hearted
person: is very sensitive, very considerate, has
empathy. They are very careful
that they don't hurt others. However, since I am
sensitive, I get hurt easily.
I don't hurt others but I hurt all the time.

Who is a Gyani? He is like a flower, while handling others, as a Karta; but he is like a rock when he receives experiences, as a Bhokta. Karta means I contribute to the world; so when I work in the world; I am sensitive; but at the same time, the sensitivity must be supported by wisdom and maturity.

More sensitive you are; you are aware of insensitivities of others as well. I should learn to accommodate insensitivity of others. Sensitivity should be supported by maturity. Maturity means understanding that different people have different levels of maturity and sensitivity.

Gyani does not disturb the world knowingly, as he is a considerate person. He does not do himsa to others.

Receiving experiences includes being insulted etc; his heart is rocklike; he is not hurt.

“ A Gyani’s heart is harder than a Diamond in receiving experiences; he is more tender than a flower when he is handling experiences.”

He does not hurt; he is not hurt. Therefore He does not have guilt in life. **He is free from hurt and guilt, two mind disturbing emotions.**

Gyani is a liberated person. He is liberated from what? Sri Krishna says, he is not liberated from external things; rather, he has inner freedom from four things:

1. Harshaha:

Over-excitement or elation. In over-excitement I lose my discriminatory power.

Our great wealth is our discriminatory power and emotion should not rob us of

this power. The danger is I forget that this over-excitement is temporary; I

think it will be permanently be with me, a wrong expectation.

Harshaha's impact physically

is not good as well. Some even get heart attack during great happiness.

2. Amarsha:

Intolerance; impatience; restlessness; perfectionist.

The more dynamic a

person is the more impatient he is. He can't stand slow people. A perfectionist

is rare. Generally, they get children who are opposite of their character.

Generally, as an Amarsha, I am irritable.

Inner leisure is

freedom from amarsha.

3. Bhayam: Fear, insecurity.

Fear is innate in

everyone. Hence children cling to their mother. Physically we are never hundred

percent secure. Weather, time, body etc are all threats to our security. Even medicine

can't make a physical body immortal.

Take away:

A

Gyani is free from:

Harshaha:Over-excitement

Amarshaha:
Intolerance

Bhayam:
Fear and insecurity.

A Gyani is free from hurt
and guilt, two mind disturbing emotions.

Mananam is process of
removing doubts by asking questions.

Our
life is full of struggle. What is the definition of struggle?
It is any
activity that you perform that is backed by a sense of
incompleteness. Gyani
does not struggle.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawad Geeta, Class 160: Verses

Shloka # 13:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥१२.१३॥

**He who is not hateful towards any creature,
who is friendly and compassionate, who has no idea of 'mine'
and the idea of
egoism, who is the same under sorrow and happiness, who is
forgiving;**

Continuing his teachings

Swamiji said in first twelve shlokas of Ch. 12 Sri Krishna has talked about a range of sadhanas that together are called Bhakti Yoga.

And as I repeatedly said, bhakthi yoga includes the first two levels of karma yoga; bhakthi yoga includes the next two levels of upasana; and bhakthi yoga includes the last and final level of Gyana yoga as well. And by Gyana yoga we mean vedanta shravana manana nidhidhyasanam, and without this Gyana yoga, the bhakthi yoga series of sadhanas remain incomplete. Bhakthi yoga has to be capped or culminated only through vedanta shravana manana nidhidhyasana, which Sri Krishna calls aksharopasana.

At this stage he becomes a Gyani. He realizes Lord is never away from Me. The distance between Lord and me is only due to my delusion and this notional distance is removed by knowledge. Therefore I am not away from the Lord; Lord is not away from me, saha aham asmi; and aham saha asmi; and a person who has gained this knowledge is called parama hamsah; aham sah; and sah aham; the one who has clearly grasped this is called parama hamsah. And that is why the mantra is also called parama hamsah mantra; soham hamsah; aham sah soham and therefore this culmination of bhakthi we called in the last class; advaita bhakthi or Gyana nishta.

From Shloka # 13- #19, Sri

Krishna is talking about nature of Gyani Bhakta. He talked about such a bhakti in in two shlokas in Ch.7 and they are further elaborated upon here.

Swami Chinmayananda beautifully says: When love or bhakthi increases, the distance decreases; and that is why we also say when we love someone very intensely; we have an expression he or she is very close to me.

When you love somebody, the greater the love is, lesser the distance. Highest love (infinite) has zero distance. So, in intense love, one embraces, it removes all distance. So also in advaitam, Jivatma paramatma distance is not there. Sri Krishna says Gyani is Me and I am Gyani. We are discussing such a gyani and how he behaves in the world. He has prarabhdha karmas. He also has punyam and papam. Hence he will also face favorable and unfavorable situations; so, how does he respond to them?

Adveshta (non hatred)

First Lakshanam of a Gyani is, he is one who never justifies hatred, because there is no basis for it. We can disagree with a person or his actions; we may even take action; but hatred is not a method of expression of disapproval. Even criticism should not have a hint of hatred. I do not reject anybody mentally. I should be able to pray for the well being of all. This inner non-rejection of a person should become natural to me; I may pray that he changes his behavior. This is test #1 for your self; don't test or judge others. We are no one to judge others. Even self-judgment should be used appropriately. It can cause inferiority complexes, self-

condemnation etc. It can be used only as an inspiration for more effort. It should be a positive force.

Maitraha: Friend:

Gyani is a friend of everyone. What is definition of a friend. Bhrtahari defines it as: My friend will guide me if I am going in a wrong direction; a lamp throws light everywhere, but underneath itself it is dark. I may not know my problem; so, one who tells me my weaknesses, is a friend; he is one who puts me in a righteous path; My friend is a confidante, he even keeps secrets. He never reveals my private secrets. All my gunas he shares with others. In adversity, people tend to leave. When I lose money all people leave. A friend in need is a friend indeed. In crisis he does not leave you. He is willing to help in the best way he can. Bhrtahari wrote Niti-Shastram and Vairagya shastram.

Karuna (Compassion)

Compassion means a sensitive mind; that can place itself in other persons mind. We often do this, while watching a movie. When the hero dies, we also cry. A sensitive mind is empathetic. He feels pain of other person. He then wants to help resolve the pain, even as I help myself spontaneously. **One method is praying that I am willing to give benefit of my prayer to someone else. This also is Karuna. The prayer, here, must be sincere.**

**He spontaneously
helps the person in trouble.**

Nirmamaha: One without ownership to anything.

So
how do you give up your ownership; there are two methods; one
is the religious method;
another is vedantic method; Religious
method is relatively easier.

Vedantic method is when
I know I am the atma; I come to
know that atma is asangah; atma is like space;
not related to or connected to anything; Therefore atma is
nitya sambandha rahita;
free from all relations and associations, and since I am the
asanga atma; how can I
be connected to anything; how can I claim anything as mine.
And therefore nirmamatvam
is owning up the asanga
atma svarupam.

Religious method: By understanding that everything I possess
is a temporary gift from God for use, after that I have to
give it back. And after using that I have to leave it back;
therefore whether they are people, children, mother, father,
everything and every person is a gift; Therefore, I remember
Oh Lord I am grateful to you for giving me everything; and I
will use them for my growth; However, when the appropriate
time comes and when you choose to take them back, I will not
make any complaint against you; I will only address a Thanks
to you. It will say, Oh Lord; thank you for giving me my
mother, father, the
grand mother, grandfather, the spouse, children, anything
ultimately including
the body; therefore remembering that everything belongs to the
Lord:

It

is not a mere prayer but I must mean it from my innermost heart; and that is called nirmamatvam. We need not physically give up anything; we can use everything; with the awareness that they are meant for my use but they are not meant for my ownership; it has nothing to do with the physical possession;

Here, you need not physically give up anything. Just be aware that you have no ownership.

Nirahamakara:

Nirahankarah: When I have got ownership and **identification with the external world it is called mamakarah**; and when I have got ownership and identification with my own sharira trayam; sthula; sukshma; karana shariram; that ownership is called ahamkarah; **Identification with the body-mind-complex is ahamkara**; and identification with everything external is mamakara; and how do you give up the mamakara? The method is to remember that this body is a gift from the Lord. I have told you Bhrthari wrote Neethi shatakam and vairagya shatakam; in his Vairagya shatakam; in the end he writes a beautiful verse. This is the thank you note; given by an enlightened person at the time of death; when everybody tries to cry and grieve, Bhrthari tells a wise person what will be his attitude; So in that beautiful verse he addresses all the five elements: akasha; vayu; agni; apah; prithvi;

And

addressing all of them, he says: Oh Elements; you have all given a portion of yours for building up this body; body has got akasha; a portion, and it has got vayu, in the form of breath; it has got agni in the form of

temperature; and it has got
jalam inside; water is there; we drink; and it has got earth;
all the weight is
the earth; Therefore this physical body called pancha
bhouthika shariram; is a gift from
the five elements given for me; so that I will use this body
for attaining moksha; And Bhrthari addresses
the five elements and tells that I have intelligently made use
of this body;
now I am returning the body to you;

I have no ownership of my sharira.

I am merging into Brahman.
This attitude is Nirahamkara.

Sama-dukha-sukha: One who has equipoise.

One who has a shock absorber
that absorbs shocks of life; shocks that are like potholes on
a road. Gyanam is
the shock absorber that absorbs such dukha without trauma to
mind. Aham Satyam,
Sarvam Mithya.

Everywhere
there is vedantic as well as
religious method; vedantic method is
too high; in this method; aham satyam; everything else is
mithya or dream;
Therefore sukham is dream; dukham is dream; enjoying
a poised mind, is the vedantic method but
it requires lot of assimilation.

Religious method:

Everything in creation is given by God and is purposeful.
Some, I know the
purpose, but others I don't know their purpose. Having
conviction that God does

not create anything without purpose. The more you study, the more you realize everything has a purpose. We have to apply this for sukha dukha pair as well as they are an integral part of creation. Everyone goes through ups and downs; they have their purpose to polish my inner self.

Dukham is a process to improve my inner self. Once I have this conviction, I will receive everything with equanimity.

Kshami: is one with Kshama, a difficult virtue also known as Titiksha. When I face a situation, I think is unfavorable to me, I try to change it to make it (situation) favorable. This conversion can be in two ways:

1. Violent: Verbal or even physical to change a situation.
2. Non-violent:

Of the two, violence comes naturally to us. Kshamvan is one who postpones the violent method. He tries to adopt non-violent method. The more you postpone, the more you have kshama.

While violent method is immediate, effective and quick; and it is easier; its side effects are more damaging. Then, I avoid violent method. Here victim of violence also becomes violent. A child in this situation becomes violent when they grow up. Knowing this, I will try to adopt violence as a last resort.

Shloka # 14:

12.14 He who is ever content, who is a yogi,
who has self-control, who has firm conviction, who has
dedicated his mind and
intellect to Me-he who is such a devotee of Mine is dear to
Me.

Santushtaha:

Inner fullness, both psychologically
and intellectually, nothing is lacking. This is Santushtaha;
one who is
contented. He has knowledge, Aham Purnaha. Question comes up,
if one is
contented, why will one work? How will society prosper? Our
answer is that only
contented people contribute to society. A person without
contentment will not contribute,
as he is selfish.

Life of Gyani is dedicated
to contributing to others' welfare. When is he contented? We
also obtain brief
moments of contentedness; but it is transient. Gyani has
eternal contentment.

Yogi: means One who is a
great Yogi.

It does not mean performing
asanas. Yogi means one who has Gyanam. How is Yoga Gyanam? Yuj
is the root word
of Yoga; meaning combines. **Through
knowledge distance between Jivatma and Paramtma is removed.**
This distance is
due to ignorance. If god is all-pervading, how can there be a
distance from me.
Vaikunta of puranas is our own Atma. The distance is due to my

delusion. A

child in mother's lap cries dreaming its mother is lost, but upon waking it

stops. **Yoga is uniting process of Jivatma and paramatma.**

Miraculous power: Gyani need not have miraculous power; he only needs to have wisdom. So

I have told you of four types of people, they are:

Fourth

type: the one who has neither miraculous powers nor knowledge; majority; no siddhi or Gyanam.

Third

type: one who has siddhi but no knowledge is the third variety.

The

second type: has self-knowledge without any miraculous powers.

The First one: the one who has both Gyanam and the siddhi.

Of

these four types, the first one is liberated because he has got Gyanam; siddhi

is there of course and is a bonus; the second one is also liberated; because he

or she has Gyanam; without even an iota of siddhi; and the third one has got all siddhis

without Gyanam;

Gyanam is primary, while

siddhi is an obstacle to moksha. So yogi is with or without Gyanam.

Yatatma:

Take away:

Qualities of a Gyani are:

Adveshta: Non-hatred

Mitra: A friend

Karuna: Compassion

Nirmamaha: Without
ownership of anything

Nirahamkara: without
ahamkara and mamakara.

Sama-dukha-sukha: Equipoise
in all situations

Kshami: One with Kshama

Santushta: Contented

Method of expressing

karuna: One method is praying that I am willing to give
benefit of my prayer to
someone else. The prayer, here, must be sincere.

Identification

with the external world it is called mamakarah.

Identification

with the body-mind-complex is ahamkara.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawad Geeta, Class 159: Chapter 12, Verses 12 & 13

Shloka # 11:

ॐ कर्मणो भक्त्या चोत्थिताः ।
ॐ कर्मणो भक्त्या चोत्थिताः । ॐ कर्मणो भक्त्या चोत्थिताः ॥१२.११॥

If you are unable to do even this, in that case, having resorted to the Yoga for Me, thereafter renounce the results of all works by becoming controlled in mind.

Continuing his teachings

Swamiji said, in chapter 12, from shloka # 3 to # 11, Sri Krishna talked about the five stages of Bhakti Yoga. Bhakti yoga is not a separate Sadhana rather it is a common name for the five stages of Karma Yoga, Sadhana Yoga and Gyana Yoga. All five stages, starting with the fifth stage, down to first one, were discussed.

The first stage, described in shloka # 11, is Sakama Karma, the lowest stage of Bhakti Yoga. Here one can be a materialistic person but nevertheless he has to observe two points:

1. Do not adopt immoral methods for material gains. Follow dharmic methods.
2. When you accomplish your material desire and when you are about to enjoy it; before enjoying it, take a moment to say a prayer to God with a

proper attitude; this
is known as Ishwara Prasada Bhavana.

This itself will start
the purification of mind. This Ishwara sambandha will purify
the mind. When performed
over a long period of time, the mind will mature and your
desires will also
undergo a change; it will become subtle; it will become a
desire to serve
others. The most Satvic desire one can have is the desire for
knowledge.

Once I graduate to
stage two, my desire becomes Nishkama karma, or selfless
desire. It should
benefit more people and the overall environment I live in.
This leads to an
expanded mind. It will lead to a Pancha Maha Yagya karma mind.
The second stage
is Nishkama karma yoga.

The next level, the third
stage, is Ishta Devata Upasana Yoga. Mind withdraws from
extrovert activities
and becomes more introverted. Then I am ready for Eka Rupa
Ishwara Upasana.

Then I come to Nirguna Ishwara Gyanam, the highest stage of
Bhakti Yoga. And if I
successfully pass through all the five levels of

bhakthi
yoga; I will
become a Brahma Gyani; I will become a sthira pragnaha; I will
become an
advaita bhakthaha.

Now Sri Krishna concludes

Dhyanam: It is a combination of both above; one who has understood scriptures and then dwells upon god. It is meditation with knowledge.

Karmaphala Tyagaha: Sri Krishna talked about this topic in Shloka # 11 as well. Here one dedicates all Karma phala's to god and takes back Ishwara prasadam. This Sadhana was there in the previous list of five sadhanas as the lowest one. But here Sri Krishna places it as highest one, in this list of four. He openly contradicts the previous shloka.

Shankaracharya says, it is an open contradiction; but Sri Krishna's intention is that while Karma phala thyaga is lowest step; unfortunately, most people are ready only for this lowest level alone. We are still materialistic people. We are ready for this stage only. Sri Krishna does not want to give such people an inferiority complex. Hence he is saying something like the phrase "small is beautiful"; so he glorifies this sadhana. This whole shloka is called Arthavada Shloka, which means

exaggerating the value of a sadhana to encourage the people to practice that value.

Of the four sadhanas:

1. Lowest is abhyasa; a mechanical meditation.

2. Gyanam: is better than Abyasa Yoga. Meditation-less knowledge is better than Knowledge-less Meditation.
3. Dhyanam: Meditation practiced after gaining knowledge, is superior to Gyanam.
4. Karma Phala
Thyaga: is better than all three above, although it is lowest in list of previous five sadhanas. This ranking is meant to encourage people to practice Sakama Karmas.

What will Karma Phala

Thyaga lead to? Dedicating fruits of effort to God is an acknowledgement;

Nivedanam, informing God, that everything is due to his grace; this awareness is karmaphala thyaga. Whatever phalas I get, I accept it as Ishwara Prasada.

The word Prasada in

Sanskrit means tranquility of mind. If every experience is a prasada in my

mind, I will have no resistance to the experience. I give up resistance, hence

called Thyagaha. This leads to shanti. With this Bhakti Yoga Sadhanas are over.

First part of chapter one is over as well.

Second part of Chapter one

is from Shloka # 13 to the end.

Shloka # 13:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १३ ॥

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १३ ॥ 12.13 ॥

**He who is not hateful towards any creature,
who is friendly and compassionate, who has no idea of 'mine'
and the idea of
egoism, who is the same under sorrow and happiness, who is
forgiving;**

Say a person goes through
all five stages of Bhakti yoga successfully; how long will it
take? Swamiji
says, it depends on the person; it may take one life or
several lives; he then
becomes a Gyani or a Parabhakta or the highest bhakta. He has
Gyanam because he
reached the fifth stage. He knows Eka Rupa, Vishwa Rupa and
finally Arupa
Ishwara. Once he knows Arupa Ishwara, he knows that he is not
a subject, rather
he realizes that, " I am He, Soham".

He realizes that God is
non-different from me; that, he is an Advaita Gyani. He
realizes Paramatma and
Jivatma are not different; they are just one word used for the
same entity;
like wave and ocean are names of water; there is no substance
known as wave or
ocean; it is all water. So, he is highest Bhakta, an Advaita
Gyani. He is
called Sthita Pragyaha; one who has conviction regarding
Advaita Gyanam.

How does such an Advaita
Gyani face different situations in life? How does he respond?
This is known as
Parabhakta Lakshanani. Sri Krishna talks on this subject. Why
does he talk
about it?

It is a marketing tool used
by Sri Krishna.

The first benefit is, once I know the benefit of this
knowledge; I will be tempted to follow the Sadhana.

Then

the second benefit is; whatever are the natural traits of the
Gyani; they
should become a sadhana for me, to be
deliberately practiced. Whatever is a natural trait of a
realized person; I
should take them as a sadhana to be
deliberately practiced.

So

whatever be his natural trait, they should be taken as a list
of sadhanas, which I
should deliberately and gradually practice. Therefore, we can
take this as a
list of virtues to be cultivated. And from this we come to
know another important
thing also; and that is, when a person practices spiritual
sadhana and attains
liberation; he is going to survive in this world.

So

moksha is not a
benefit, which is promised after death. So Krishna
makes it very clear; moksha is a state of
mind, that you will enjoy while you are living in this world.
And therefore our
moksha is called jivan mukthi;
therefore the description that we get is jivan mukthihi; jivan
muktha lakshanani; sthira prajnana lakshanani; para
bhaktha lakshanani, is the
topic now.

And

this is from this thirteen shloka to the 19th shloka and 20th shloka is the conclusion.

Traits of a Gyani:

How do I know if I am a Gyani? You can check for these traits in a Gyani.

First Virtue: Non-hatred (Adveshta)

He does not hate any being in universe; he has freedom from hatred. See, how many people you hate, and you will know your status. So we should ask do I hate anyone; Not anyone? We have got a very big list; starting from neighbor onwards; there is a very big list; bigger the list; farther from moksha I am;

There is an interesting phenomenon, whenever the shastra says: you should not hate anyone; our first immediate reaction is we try to justify our hatred; so we give a big description of the person; and what all negative traits he has got; what all akramas he is doing; Swamiji that is why I am hating; they expect Swamiji to OK that person deserves hatred. So according to shastras there is no such thing called justified or justifiable hatred, any form of hatred is unjustifiable. And why do we say so; because according to shastra; every person is intrinsically a good divine and pure person. There is no impure person in the world; there is no evil character in the world; every single jeevatma is essentially none other than suddha paramatma; therefore nobody deserves hatred. No person deserves hatred; because every person is a Saint; the worst sinner is also a saint.

A person's actions maybe

corrupt, although he is pure. Can we hate actions of a person?

Shankaracharya

says, even wrong action or behavior of a person does not deserve hatred. **Hatred is not a remedy for misbehavior.**

No action or character can be enhanced by hatred. **Neither a person nor his behavior deserves hatred. Hatred is an utterly useless tendency.**

Further, hatred damages the mind of the hater. It corrodes the mind.

Shastra's say every person deserves love; misbehavior deserves an appropriate response.

What is the response?

Hatred is not the right response. Shastra's suggest using Sama (education),

Dana, Bheda and Danda. Even application of Danda should be performed with love alone and not hatred.

Is it possible to give Danda with love? Shastra's say even punishment can be given with love. Citing an example: a mother beating her child, even here, the mother can't hate her child. So misbehavior requires appropriate action with love. Therefore, even Sri Krishna may choose to destroy kamsa; and He may ask Arjuna to destroy Duryodhana. Therefore whatever appropriate action is to be taken we should take; but the advice is, it should not be motivated by hatred; but it must be motivated by love and to change or correct the person. Freedom from hatred is the first trait of a Gyani.

Take away:

Bhakti Yoga is not a particular Sadhana; rather it is a range of sadhanas that everyone has to go through.

On hatred:

First virtue of a saint is
Non-hatred (Adveshta)

Hatred is not a remedy for
misbehavior.

Neither a person nor his
behavior deserves hatred. Hatred is an utterly useless
tendency.

Shastras say every person
deserves love; misbehavior deserves an appropriate response.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Baghawad Geeta, Class 158: Chapter12, Verses 9 – 11

Shloka # 9:

**If, however, you are unable to establish the
mind steadily on Me, then, O Dhananjaya, seek to attain Me
through the Yoga of
Practice.**

Continuing his teachings
Swamiji said, by the way of answering Arjuna's question Sri
Krishna is teaching
us Bhakti Yoga. Bhakti Yoga is not a particular Sadhana;
rather it is a range

of sadhanas that everyone has to go through. The range of Sadhanas are presented at five levels and completion of all levels ensures one's moksha. In this chapter all five levels are presented, hence importance of the chapter.

While dealing with the five levels Sri Krishna starts from the highest level

and then descends to lower levels. If a person is not ready at the fifth level,

the highest level, then he can go to the fourth level and so on, down to first.

Fifth level is the step that leads to liberation; Gyana Yoga sadhana is also

known as Akshara Upasana in this chapter; this upasana which is, same as Gyana

yoga, consists of sravanam, mananam and nidhidhyasanam. Thus, Gyana Yoga is

name of Bhakti Yoga at the highest level.

Shankaracharya confirms

this in Viveka chudamani as well. Bhakthi is the final stage of

liberation; and in the final stage; bhakthi is defined as self-enquiry; Brahman

enquiry; nirguna Ishvara vicharah. And Sri Krishna

himself admitted that this Gyana yoga form of bhakthi yoga is not easy for the majority and they need not feel bad

about it; let them try the fourth step and the fourth level of bhakthi yoga was

discussed in shlokas No.6, 7 and 8.

For such persons, he

advises going to fourth level, that is Saguna Ishwara Upasana, as Nirguna

Upasana is difficult for an unprepared mind. This Saguna Ishwara is Vishwarupa Ishwara.

The eight faceted Ishwara, Ashtamurthy, is Vishwa rupa Ishwara. The eight facets are: The five elements, the Pancha Bhutas, Surya (stars), Chandra (planets) and all Jiva Rashis. This is the Ashtamurthy or Virat Ishwara or Vishwa. May you learn to meditate on such an Ishwara.

If the mind is not subtle enough to conceive the Vishwa Rupa Ishwara, do not feel bad; come down one more level. Instead of Vishwa Rupa Ishwara we can choose a personal God. In our religion, we have many personal gods to choose from. You have gods who are in human form, animal, tree or even a mixture of forms, such as Narasimha etc. We have puranas that describe these gods. We have 36 puranas; 18 puranams and 18 upa puranams; They will give the description of eka rupa Isvara, which includes their body; how many hands they have; how many heads they have; and how many weapons they wield; what type of dress they wear; all these are there; Choose an Ishta devatha, and then practice ishta devatha upasana; otherwise called eka rupa upasana; which Sri Krishna calls abhyasa yoga.

This third step was discussed in Shloka # 9.

If you are unable to focus mind on Vishwa Rupa Sadhana; if you have strong Raga Dvesha; mind will dwell on objects of attachments and hatreds. Such a mind can't enjoy nature, as it is a narrow mind. In such a situation nothing wrong in taking to abhyasa yoga; and if you cannot love a personal God; we have got mantra, yantra, tantra; thus, we have, shree chakra; it is not a person but a symbol which you can visualize; we have got surya devatha, which is not a person, but a symbol, which is called pratika upasana. Either a prathima upasana or pratika upasana; prathima means God as a person with limbs like you and mine; that is called anthropomorphism; anthropomorphism means visualising God as a human being; like you and I. Our weaknesses are also attributed to God; this is

called anthropomorphic approach to Lord; which is also acceptable; and in Gita it is called abhyasa yoga.

May you strive to reach Me.

May you strive to attain Moksha. Can one get moksha through Ishta Devata

Upasana? Answer is both yes and no. No, one can't directly get liberation; yes,

one can indirectly obtain moksha. Thus Ishta Devata Upasana will lead to Vishwa

Rupa Upasana; rather Ishta Devata Upasana will lift you to Vishwa Rupa Upasana;

Vishwa rupa Upasana will eventually lift you to Nirguna Upasana and then on to Moksha.

So, it is a parampara karanam for moksha.

Therefore, Arjuna, come to

Ishta Devata Upasana.

Suppose a person says O Krishna I am not fit for eka rupa upasana also, because upasana is a mental activity. Upasana is visualizing the Lord within myself; purely with the help of the mind; Upasana is defined as manasam karma; which means the physical body has to be passive; this is the technical definition; many people define puja as upasana. Remember physical puja cannot be called upasana, because upasana by definition is manasam karma. I should be seated in a place; I should not use any of my Gyanendriyas or karmendriyas, I have to withdraw all my sense organs and it should be, a purely mental activity; which means a person should not be an extrovert person. Upasana is possible only when a person is ready to withdraw the mind away from the external world, make it antharmukham; turn inwards and within my heart, I should be able to visualize my iShta devatha.

And therefore, if a person is extrovert; if a person is rajo guna pradhana; that person will find it difficult, even to sit in a place for five minutes when one has to meditate. Even to

sit in a place for five minutes, a rajasic person will find extremely difficult; because he is an embodiment of dynamism and therefore he wants to be active. And therefore Sri Krishna, I am not ready for meditation; and if I do meditation, I will end up as 'mad'. For a restless person, sitting quiet is extremely difficult, that is why many people after retirement get into lot of problems. Not only problem for themselves; the primary sufferer is the wife and family. Generally she recommends take up another job; if you leave me it is OK, because it is extremely difficult.

So, I am not ready for meditation. In that case come down to Step # 2; come to karma or life of activity. This is described in next shloka.

Shloka # 10:

If you are unable even to practise, be intent on works for Me. By undertaking works for Me as well, you will attain perfection. [Identity with Brahman.]

O Arjuna, if you are unfit for Abhyasa Yoga as well (Eka Rupa Upasana) then may you be committed to a life of activity. There are two types of activity: 1) Nishkama Karamani; serving society; taking to Pancha Maha Yagna. And 2) Sakama Karma.

Nishkama karma: To serve humanity look at nature; how a river flows down; how trees give fruits, how cows give milk; thus in nature there is more giving and less taking. Therefore, may you be, like a Vrikshaha (tree); standing in the hot sun, the tree gives shade, they give fruits, they give everything expecting nothing;

every tree is like a
mahatma; So, it is a life dedicated to others. So, make your
life one of
contribution and do so with proper attitude. Look at society
as Ishwara. Be
selflessly active. Be a Nishkama karma performer. Lead a life
of service. You
will certainly attain liberation.

How will you attain
liberation? It is an indirect way to liberation; it will lead
to eka rupa
upasana; it will then lead to aneka rupa upasana; then to
gyana yoga and
eventually to moksha. Therefore, Arjuna, take to a life of
Nishkama Karma.

If one says, I can't commit
to nishkama karma as I still have countless desires; I still
have to fulfill my
duties;

How, then, can I come to
nishkama karma?

Sri Krishna says, Ok, have
your personal desires; nothing wrong in fulfilling your duties
as a family
person; then perform Sakama Karmas. Vedas do prescribe Sakama
Karmas. Reality
is that, unfulfilled desires can obstruct your spiritual path
when you perform
other Upasanas. So fulfill your desires. So, be committed to
Sakama Karma yoga.
If so, How to perform this yoga? This is the lowest step.

Shloka # 11:

If you are unable to do even this, in that

case, having resorted to the Yoga for Me, thereafter renounce the results of all works by becoming controlled in mind.

If you can't perform Nishkama Karma, serving society, serve yourself.

So Sri Krishna says; if you are not able to commit yourselves to serving others; serving the society; by taking to Ishvara-arpana buddhi; as Ishvara-arpanam; by taking to that attitude; if you are not able to do that; then may you take to sakama karma.

Shankarcharya says, in rare cases even Nishidha karmas are allowed such as animal sacrifice to god; it even allows use of alcohol. How to perform this karma; it is sakama karma, selfish activity, expecting worldly benefits and personal benefit. Here, dedicate sakama karma as Ishwara Arpanam. Take the phalam as your own result and enjoy.

But when you are enjoying the benefit, don't call it your benefit; call it Ishwara Prasadam; hence, the reason, children are named Ram Prasad, Krishna Prasad etc; with this, even a selfish action purifies the mind. Even a house you built for yourself; look upon that house as Lord's house. Install God in the house; dedicate house to God; " say, "permit me to live in your temple". I am living in temple of god. This fulfills your personal desire at the same time kama karma purifies your mind. So you are under care of Lord.

In fact, that house will be a pure house free from all forms of

inauspiciousness; therefore
it becomes Lord's house; it becomes Lord's responsibility to
drive away all the
evil forces and therefore you are living under the care of the
Lord. So this
life style is called sakama
karma pradhana karma yoga.

Therefore
Sri Krishna says, dedicate the result of all the karmas, which
includes kama karmas and
which includes the inevitable nishidha karmas; like when you
are cleaning
the house, by using insecticide etc. Certainly himsa is
involved; you are doing
himsa; for keeping up the house; And there will be inevitable
papam; they are
called soona; soona means inevitable papams, to be done by a
grihastha and even if such papams are there;
nishidha karmas are
there; even those nishidha
karmas will not affect you, when they are offered to the Lord.
They will only
purify you.

If I do this karma yoga, I
will graduate to second step of nishkama karma yoga; where
world of glamor will
not appeal anymore; material desire will be replaced by
spiritual desires. This
is called maturity. Once kama comes down, I will get Chitta
Shudhi and then I
continue on to Eka Rupa, then Aneka rupa and finally Gyana
yoga.

This is lowest level of
bhakti. If one says, I can't even practice this, then better
luck in next

birth. With this all five stages have been discussed. All five together are known as Bhakti Yoga. If a person is born advanced; he can go to Gyana Yoga directly; because they have gone through those Upasanas in previous lives, other wise one has to start at level # 1.

Take away:

Bhakti Yoga is not a particular Sadhana; rather it is a range of sadhanas that everyone has to go through.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bhavad Gita, Class 157: Chapter 12, Verses 5 to 9

Shloka # 5:

For them who have their minds attached to the Unmanifested the struggle is greater; for, the Goal, which is the Unmanifest, is attained with difficulty by the embodied ones.

Continuing his teachings Swamiji said, I had pointed out that in Ch. 12 Sri Krishna is presenting Bhakti Yoga in five levels. The fifth level is nothing but Gyana Yoga; as such Gyana yoga is the highest level of Bhakti Yoga and here the Lord is worshipped as Nirguna Brahman. Worship of nirguna

Brahman is unique; it is not a physical worship of asanam samarpayami; argyam samarpayami, padyam samarpayami, etc. because for nirgunam Brahma where is the question of argyam, padyam, etc. Argyam means water for washing the hands; Padyam means water for washing the feet; Achamaniyam, water for washing the mouth. And nirguna Isvara does not have hands, does not have feet; does not have the mouth; where is the question of argya, padya achamaniyadi.

And

therefore worship is in the form of the very study about Nirgunam Brahma; the very enquiry is a form of worship; the enquiry consisting of shravana, mananam and nidhidhyasanam; systematic study, gaining the knowledge; converting it into conviction, and assimilating this wisdom; that alone is the puja and what I am offering is, offering my ignorance into the fire of knowledge; and therefore Gyana yoga itself is the form of worship I have to practice.

Sri Krishna presents this

Gyana Yoga form of worship, in shlokas # 3, # 4 and # 5 respectively.

Sri Krishna used the word

Akshara Upasana. It means Nirguna Ishwara upasana consisting of sravana, manana and nidhidhyasanam and Gyana Yogi's are called akshara upasakas. Sri Krishna considers Gyana Yoga very difficult. The Upanishads compare it to walking on a razor's edge. Why is it so difficult?

It is difficult, as God

cannot be objectified, and as he is inconceivable etc.

And the Lord is not available for mental conception. He is imperceptible, unconceivable; if so how can I worship or even study. Because my intellect is used to objectification and therefore an objectifying instrument will find it difficult to conceive of an unobjectifiable Brahman. And it can be ultimately received only in one form; and what is that form; that Brahman, the nirguna vastu is not objectifiable; not because it is non-existent; but because it is in the form of myself; Soham; that is called soham dhyanam; Soham is Sah Aham . That nirgunam Brahman, aham meaning, I am He; that alone got shortened and is known as hamsa mantra or hamsa gayathri.

Furthermore, Gyana Yoga also requires many qualifications, making it even more difficult.

Now the question is, if Gyana Yoga is difficult, what am I supposed to do; after all I am a seeker?

Swamiji says, here one has to be careful.

Majority of people will give answers that are non-Vedic; they will advise people to take to other paths such as Karma Yoga, Raja Yoga, Hatha Yoga etc that are not that difficult. They will say, follow a simpler Yoga. They feel Bhakti Yoga is easier, as there, all that we do, is shed tears.

Now Sampradaya, traditional teaching, does not give this answer. It says, there are no different paths to Gyana Yoga; only Gyanam will lead you there. If ignorance is the problem then

knowledge is the only solution. It is like removing darkness; only light can remove darkness; other methods won't.

Shankaracharya tells very clearly in his Atma Bodha; that darkness can go only by light; ignorance can go only by knowledge. Samsara is because of ignorance, therefore moksha can be only through knowledge. And if I firmly assert that knowledge is the only means, you should not conclude I am a fanatic; because when I have to ascertain a fact; you cannot call me a fanatic. That means to not be called a fanatic, I should admit to alternative methods for removing darkness. As Dayananda Swami says; I say light alone removes darkness; if you call me a fanatic; better I will be a fanatic; rather than a lunatic. So you call me by whatever name; I have to tell ignorance goes by knowledge alone. And the vedas repeatedly ascertain this fact. And therefore to say that Gyanam is difficult and therefore I should take alternative method, is born out of confusion regarding spirituality.

And again we should remember darkness or ignorance goes only by knowledge; and knowledge comes only by enquiry or study. Any knowledge will come only by studying the relevant literature. If I want physics knowledge, I have no other method other than studying the physics literature; Knowledge requires the relevant study. Any knowledge requires consistent and systematic study. That should be extended to this knowledge also. Not only you should study; I should study the appropriate literature.

If alternative methods were available, Sri Krishna would have used that method. Even he says there is no alternative method. If so, what do I do? The answer is, make it easy. How do I

make it easy? Prepare yourself; qualify yourself through Gyana
Yogyata

Praptihi. Sri Krishna says, Gyana Yoga is very easy, if you
prepare. Swamiji

says, anything in life is easy, if you have prepared. For the
unprepared, it is
difficult, so prepare, obtain Gyanam and be free.

How to prepare? Sri Krishna

presents those steps now. He says, go to fourth, if difficult
drop to third and

if that is difficult too drop to the second and or even first
level of Bhakti

Yoga, if required.

If Nirguna Ishwara Gyana

Dhyanam is difficult come down to Saguna Ishwara Upasana,
meditating on God

with attributes; that is Lord with entire universe; as Virat
Ishwara, as

discussed in Ch. 11. Lord whose body consists of all three
Lokas; practice

Vishwa Rupa Dhyanam, even in worldly transactions. Dedicate
all your worldly

transactions to the Virat Ishwara.

So they dedicate all the actions at my
feet; and where

are the feet of the Lord; Lord's feet are everywhere. So when
I am doing an action, this action goes to the world and it is
acted upon by the laws of the universe and all these are done
by the Lord whose hands are nothing but the laws of karma.
Therefore when I say, the laws of karma shape the result; for
me the devotee; the laws of karma are the hands of the Lord.
Every law is the hands of the lord; so Lord is shaping the
result through his hands in the form of the law of karma. And,
Therefore,

I dedicate to the laws of karma; to the hands of the lord; here the word Sanyasa means dedicating.

How can I offer Karma to God?

Suppose I dedicate my work on computers. How am I going to dedicate? What do you mean by dedication? Dedication is nothing but a particular attitude; and what is the attitude; until I complete my action, I have got control over the action; and once I have completed the action; the action has become part of this universe. And universe is none other than God, because Vishva Rupa Ishvara; and this action will be reshaped in this universe by the Lord, and according to the law of karma, an appropriate and just result is going to come; and I am mentally prepared to accept any consequence according to the law, not fancies of the lord; but the result is going to be perfectly according to the laws of karma. That means I am going to get what I legitimately deserve. And it is given to me by the lord himself; because the world is not a world for me; world is for me Vishva rupa Ishvara. And therefore I mentally think; my action is going to the Lord; and Lord is going to give me the karma phalam and whatever be the consequence. I will accept without murmuring; without grumbling; without cursing; without hesitating; I will receive. **This inner receptivity is called dedication. This inner receptivity with regard to the consequences of any action I do. And that is**

called here Ishvara arpana bhavana.

During this practice I am trying to move to the Fifth level of Bhakti Yoga. I must remember that I am committed to goal of Nirguna Ishwara Gyanam. I take to a spiritual life; but as we take on our responsibilities in world, we forget our goals. This distraction is possible. So we have to remember again and again, our goal. Thus, Ananya Yogaha means unwavering commitment.

It is like when going to Delhi we may stop at intermittent points but we don't forget our final destination is Delhi. So, they worship me through Vishwa Rupa Dhyanam.

Shloka # 6 & 7:

As for those who, having dedicated all actions to Me and accepted Me as the supreme, meditate by thinking of Me with single-minded concentration only-.

O son of Prtha, for them who have their minds absorbed in Me, I become, without delay, the Deliverer from the sea of the world which is fraught with death.

Sri Krishna says these Vishwa Rupa Upasakas are special to me as they are dedicated to discovering Me. So they look upon me not for their materialistic end but for reaching me; I am the means and the end; hence they are known as Jignasu Bhaktas.

I will rescue them from the ocean of Samsara that brings problems of Mrithyu as well; How long will it take?

It depends on level of student; so Sri Krishna says, before long, I will do so.

How will God rescue them?

I will make them fit for the fifth rung of the ladder including qualifications, Gurus, and if no Guru is available; I will become one myself. Forget Gyana Yoga Arjuna, commit to Vishwa Rupa Upasana.

Shloka # 8:

Fix the mind on Me alone; in Me alone rest the intellect. There is no doubt that hereafter you will dwell in Me alone.

Sri Krishna concludes the fourth rung discussion. Arjuna, forget Gyana Yoga, concentrate on Saguna Vishwa

Rupa Ishwara. **Fix your emotional mind in**

Me. Don't seek anything from world. Use world only for giving.

Whatever your

requirements take it from Me. Vishwa Rupa Ishwara is always with me; so

depend upon Him. Your intellect also must be convinced of Vishwa Rupa Ishwara;

you must have answers for your intellect; here scriptural knowledge helps as in

shown Ch. 7, Ch. 9, Ch 10 and Ch. 11 respectively. The teaching was: Lord is Jagat

karanam while universe is Karyam, the effect. Product is not different from

cause. Karyam Rupa Jagat is not separate from Karana Rupa Ishwara.

No

effect can be separate from the cause. So when I am handling the ornaments, I

am handling the cause, the gold alone. When I am handling the furniture, I am

handling the cause the wood alone. When I am handling the pots, I am handling

the cause, clay alone. When I am handling the world, I am handling the cause, Ishvara alone;

Therefore akasha is Ishvara; vayu is Ishvara; agni is Ishvara; sarvam Ishvara mayam jagat.

This is called conviction born out of the scriptural study.

And therefore Sri Krishna

says may your intellect also be convinced of what you are doing. It may take several lives. Glory of Vishwa Rupa bhakti

is, I am never away from God. So you will remain in me all the time like a wave

in ocean. After Vishwa Rupa Upasana practice, when there is more no doubt then

go to Fifth level and be free.

Suppose Vishwa Rupa Upasana

is also difficult for you? At this level, I should not have Raga and Dvesha; I

should look at everyone as God. So, it may be difficult.

Sri Krishna says, then come

down to level # 3.

Shloka # 9:

If, however, you are unable to establish the

mind steadily on Me, then, O Dhananjaya, seek to attain Me through the Yoga of

Practice.

On the other hand, if you feel you are unfit for level 4 and Vishwa Rupa Ishwara Upasana, then don't worry, come down to Eka Rupa Upasana and Ishta Devata Upasana. We have many personal forms for God; unique to Hinduism, they are all stepping-stones. Even Sri Krishna has many forms; there are even many types of relationships with God who is seen as baby, friend, father etc. You can take to anyone of them. How to develop this bhakti? Puranas develop this concept of personal God as Ishwara Leela; here even a fictitious character, upon dwelling on it, becomes a reality; this is psychological. Develop this bhakti and practice this Upasana, called here abhyasa Yoga.

Take away:

This inner receptivity is called dedication. This inner receptivity with regard to the consequences of any action I do. And that is called here Ishvara arpana bhavana.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Baghawad Geeta, Class 156: Chapter 12, Verses 2 – 4

Shloka # 2:

The Blessed Lord said Those who meditate on Me by fixing their minds on Me with steadfast devotion (and) being endowed with supreme faith-they are considered to be the most perfect yogis according to Me.

Continuing his teachings

Swamiji said, the chapter # 12 begins with a question from Arjuna. He asks, if Saguna Dhyanam is superior or Nirguna Dhyanam? Saguna Ishwara Dhyanam means meditating on God with attributes while Nirguna Ishwara dhyanam means meditation on the attribute-less Ishwara. The question also implies which type of devotee is greater.

Sri Krishna answered; the question itself is wrong. question of superior or inferior is not valid as that involves comparison. Between Saguna Dhyanam and Nirguna Dhyanam there is no choice. Everyone has to go through both stages. Both Sadhanas bestow different benefits.

Once both are compulsory,
how to practice them?

They can't be simultaneously practiced. They have to be practiced in a graded manner meaning

one after the other. Saguna Dhyanam prepares one for nirguna Dhyanam. It purifies the mind. So, Arjuna, don't ask what is better. Sri Krishna says, Saguna Bhakta is superior to nirguna bhakta; however, Nirguna bhakta reaches Me. Saguna Ishwara and Vishwa Rupa Ishwara are two forms of Saguna Ishwara. Fixing their minds upon me, they practice with full commitment and without fail. They are endowed with intense faith in Me. **God does not present material growth; he gives purity of mind, a non-tangible result. So we have to have intense faith, as no tangible results are forthcoming.**

Those who practice Saguna Dhyanam are indeed superior.

Shloka # 3:

Those, however, who meditate in every way on the Immutable, the Indefinable, the Unmanifest, which is all pervading, incomprehensible, change-less, immovable and constant.

Some other people follow nirguna Brahma Dhyanam as a part of Gyana Yoga. It is highest stage of Bhakti yoga.

Therefore in these three verses, Krishna is introducing Gyana yoga sadhana, which is the practice of Nirguna Ishvara dhyanam. Meditating on my highest nature. A description of

Nirguna Ishwara includes:

1. Akshara: Nirguna
Brahman.

2. Avyaktam; Ishwara in highest nature is not perceptible to **sense organs of Shabda, Sparsha, Rupa, Rasa and Gandha. Nature consist of these five sense attributes hence it is called Pra-Pancha.** Once five sense organs are closed, our world disappears. So, here, original Sri Krishna can't be touched, smelt etc. There are many things that can't be perceptible but can be ideas that can be conceived as a concept. There are many things, which cannot be perceived by the sense organs but they can be conceived by the mind; there are so many emotions; love; anger; happiness; etc. they are not perceptible; many mathematical scientific concepts and laws; you do not see; but they are ideas; Ideas cannot be perceived by the sense organs; but they can be conceived by the mind; that is why they are called concepts; so, can you say Nirguna Krishna can be conceived by the mind?

3. Achintyam: I can't be conceived in mind. I am unobjectifiable, inconceivable. If God can't be conceived, how can one talk of God? When we see an object, we give it a name as it can be perceived or conceived. But God can't be perceived or conceived.

4. Aprameyam: Lord can't be described, indescribable or un-objectifiable. The various pramanama's can't prove it. Hence called Aprameyam.

5. **Sarvatragam:** Sri Krishna adds he exists everywhere. He says he is Achalam, he can't move. Saguna Krishna moves but Nirguna

Krishna can't move, as he is formless and all pervading. To have form, it needs a boundary. If God has no form, there is no boundary; so, God is like space, all pervading, space also does not move, neither does God. Saguna God is subject to arrival and departure; Nirguna God is not.

5. **Kutastham**: He is free from all modifications. We have seen six modifications on the part of the physical body; do you remember; asthi, potentially existent; jayate, born; vardhate, grows; viparinamate, metamorphoses; kshiyate, declines; vinashyati, dies. These are the six-fold modifications caused by the time principal; so anything that exists within time; anything that is influenced by time will grow with all the six-fold modifications. The Nirguna Sri Krishna is free from all modifications.

6. **Kutaha**: means anvil of a blacksmith. The metal undergoes change but the anvil does not change at all. So, a changeless substratum is required for all changes to happen. It is a witness to all changes, while witness itself cannot change. Suppose I say that the morning class students are different from evening class; and evening class are different from morning class; you know that the students change; but the teacher is avasthatraya sakshi; If morning class teacher is different; and evening class teacher is different; I will never be able to say that the morning class students are different; evening class students are different. And therefore the knower of changes should not be subject to change. And therefore the witness consciousness principle is compared to kutah; an anvil; upon which the body-metal and the mind-metal is hammered by the various experiences of life; every letter you received; every phone call you get; they are all hammering on your head; When all these hammerings takes place, your body changes; your mind changes; but there is the changeless one. And therefore Nirguna Sri Krishna is called the changeless substratum, which remains like an anvil; that which remains

changeless like an anvil. Thus, the witness consciousness principle is compared to an anvil.

7. **Dhruvam**: He is eternal. He is beyond space and time. This is the God that is meditated upon in Gyana Yoga. How can we meditate on a featureless Brahman? Sri Krishna says one has to prepare for this.

Shloka # 4: By fully controlling all the organs and always being even-minded, they, engaged in the welfare of all beings, attain Me alone.

Preparatory qualifications for Nirguna Ishwara Dhyanam are:

Four fold qualification of Sadhana chatushtaya sampathihi; I will just enumerate them for my satisfaction: discrimination, dispassion; discipline and desire; the 4 D's.

The four qualifications are presented here:

One has to master extrovert senses organs.

Why master them? Sri Krishna says Nirguna Ishwara is one who is not experienced as an object, yet such a God exists.

And why should we master the extrovert sense organs. What is the reason; I will give you a clue here. Previously Krishna has described His higher nature; Nirguna Ishwara as unobjectifiable one, Unobjectifiable means not experiencable as an object. And if Nirguna Ishwara is not

objectifiable and still such an Ishvara exists, that Lord can exist only in one way. There is only one thing in the creation; which is unobjectifiable; There is only one such thing that exists. Thus, the eye can't see itself. This subject eye can't be seen. Similarly, the higher Sri Krishna is nothing else but the Observing Consciousness principle. Nirguna Ishwara meditation is meditating on myself, not my body; this is Atma Dhyanam or meditating on the meditator.

Since I don't objectify; my sense organs don't have anything to dwell on. So **Indriya-nigraha** is a qualification.

Equanimity

under all circumstances, a poised mind; without ego and Dvesha; committed to the wellbeing of all beings; not a narrow mind, but an expanded mind. I should feel pain of other people, an empathetic mind.

How can I do so? **Daily chant one prayer; it will give you punyam; distribute this punyam to all the living beings. This prayer will make mind sensitive.**

Those who have these qualifications, they will attain Me.

Shloka # 5:

For them who have their minds attached to the Unmanifested the struggle is greater; for, the Goal which is the Unmanifest is attained with difficulty by the embodied ones.

Here Sri Krishna openly

admits Nirguna Dhyanam is extremely difficult. The path of Gyana yoga consisting of Sravanam, mananam, and nidhidhyasanam is a difficult one.

There are big obstacles to be faced by people committed to Nirguna Ishwara Dhyanam. It is like walking on a razor's edge. The destination of a formless one is indeed difficult to reach for ordinary people.

The biggest and commonest obstacle to Vedanta is strong attachment to one own physical body, which makes the mind grossest mind; because we are identified with our grossest personality; To remember yesterday's class; grossest is annamaya kosa abhimana; he does not have even time to think of improving the mind, because where is the time of think of improving the mind, when I am all the time busy improving the body; And therefore I am obsessed with the body; I am obsessed with the protection of the body; therefore I am obsessed with the procurement for food, clothing and shelter and I am obsessed with the procurement of these three after retirement; that also has been seen; there will be no income; and the inflation; diseases comes; who will pay for the medical bill; are the children reliable; seeing them; it is not; they may be reliable; but what type of daughter in law will come I do not know; Therefore all the time worried about my physical security; and such a mind cannot think of anything beyond the physical body; and once I am attached to the physical body; through the physical body, I will be attached to the people around; directly proportional to the physical attachment is: attachment to various relations because every relation is through the body. And therefore I have a very strong individuality; limiting me; localizing me; and therefore such a person cannot imagine the unlocalised formless; it

cannot transform itself;
transform is transcending the form, is transformation; And
therefore Krishna says:
stronger the bodily attachment; more difficult is Gyana yoga;
the details
in the next class.

Take away:

God does not present
material growth; he gives purity of mind, a non-tangible
result. So we have to
have intense faith, as no tangible results are forthcoming.

Nature consisting of the
five sense attributes of Shabda, Sparsha, Rupa, Rasa and
Gandha is called
Pra-Pancha.

Sadhana chatushtaya
sampathihi are:

discrimination,
dispassion; discipline and desire; the 4 D's.

For an Empathic mind: Daily chant one prayer; it will give
you punyam; distribute this punyam to all the living beings.
This prayer will
make mind sensitive.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Baghawad Geeta, Class 155: Chapter 12, Verses 1 & 2

Swamiji introduced the chapter today. It is a small chapter consisting of 20 shlokas but a very significant chapter giving a comprehensive picture of the entire Vedic teaching or the Veda Sara.

In this chapter the first part, Shlokas # 1-12, deal with Bhakti Yoga as a means of attaining moksha. By way of discussing this topic, it removes many misconceptions about Bhakti Yoga. Shlokas # 13-20 discusses Bhakti Yoga Phalam.

These are the two topics discussed in this chapter. I will now give you a bird's eye view of Bhakti Yoga. Bhakti Yoga is not a particular sadhana but it is an entire range of sadhanas that culminate in moksha. Three sadhanas are discussed in Vedas. Gita, being the essence of Vedas, gives them as: 1) Karma yoga, 2) Upasana Yoga and, 3) Gyana Yoga. In Vedas, the word bhakti is almost never used. These three sadhanas together form Bhakti yoga. Why is it so? Sri Krishna feels, all three sadhanas should be practiced, with Ishwara Bhakti. Without an atmosphere of Ishwara Bhakti, they are not Yoga.

Thus:

Bhakti Yoga level 1: Karma
Yoga

Bhakti Yoga level 2:
Upasana Yoga

Bhakti Yoga level 3: Gyana
Yoga

For the sake of all
seekers, Sri Krishna further subdivides the three levels of
sadhana into five
to make it a little simpler.

Thus:

Karma Yoga: First level

Second level

Upasana Yoga: First level

Second

level

Gyana Yoga: Not divided.

What is difference between
Karma yoga level 1 and level 2? In level -1, Sri Krishna wants
to accommodate all
materialistic people who are not interested in moksha or in
serving other
people. He says, let materialistic people pursue their worldly
desires; as
suppression of desires is dangerous, as mind then fantasizes
on them and could
lead one astray. Even if you are not interested in god, but
only in money and
entertainment, continue. You can still be a Karma Yogi so long
as you follow

two conditions:

1. Fulfill your selfish desires legitimately.
2. When you pursue worldly pleasures and get results, before enjoying them, look upon them as gift of God or Ishwara Prasada.

Be it a car, dress, house or even food, take it first as a prasada and then enjoy it. Thus, look at house as a temple of god and that you are living in a temple of God.

Look upon even your children, not as your children, but as a gift from the Lord; thus this level of karma yoga can be defined as prasada buddhya, sakama karma anushtanam.

If I continue to perform this sadhana, then gradually, mind becomes purer and purer. And as the mind becomes purer and purer, I begin to question: Can I spend my entire life for my own personal benefit? Shouldn't I contribute something to the world? So this kind of questions gradually comes, which is an indication of purity; desire for para upakara; in sakama karma, I have a desire only for taking; in nishkama karma, I develop a desire for giving also. Life is not mere taking; life is giving also; previously I measure my success in terms of how much I have taken. Now my mind changes; I ask the question how much I have given; success is not proportional to taking; Success is directly proportional to giving.

This is the difference
between materialistic and spiritual approach.

Second level of Karma Yoga:

Sakama karma becomes level one; now, selfishness becomes less; awareness of paroupakara karmani rises. Nishkama karma and Pancha Maha Yagna karmani find more time. I do fulfill selfish desires but I also contribute to others. Giving, need not be money alone, but it can also be time and consoling words, all performed without arrogance, but done with Ishwara Arapana Bhavana. My narrowness of mind comes down. These are two levels of karma yoga.

Sakama karma gives purity.

Nishkama karma gives purity
at a faster level.

Once one has gone through two levels of Karma Yoga next comes Upasana Yoga. It is meditation on Ishwara or Saguna Ishwara Dhyanam.

Karma yoga is a must for purity of mind but it has some disadvantages. A karma yogi involved in sakama karma or nishkama karma is a busy person. In both levels of karma, the person is extrovert in nature, or with Bahir Mukhatvam. This extroverted-ness is an obstruction to Gyana Yoga. Gyana Yoga involves enquiry into your own self or Pancha Kosha Viveka; it requires an introverted mind.

Extrovert will miss self-knowledge.

In Upasana, I turn inwards, and invoke God in my heart. I train to look at my inner nature, a very important training. Sri Krishna divides this meditation into two groups.

1. Eka Ishwara Rupa
Dhyanam
2. Aneka Rupa
Ishwara Dhyanam.

Eka Rupa Ishwara Dhyanam:

Ishta Devata Dhyanam is known as Abhyasa Yoga. Once one has practiced this for some time, Sri Krishna suggests, going onto Aneka Rupa Ishwara. Look at God as not located in one place, but expand mind to Vishwa Rupa Ishwara. First sadhana focuses one's mind, while second one expands the mind. Both are Saguna Ishwara Upasanas. These are two levels of Upasanas.

Now person has Gyana

Yogyata. Now he is entering Gyana Nirguna Ishwara Brahman. In Chapter 7 it is called Para Prakriti and it includes Vedanta Sravanam, Mananam and Nidhidhyasanam. It is the systematic study of Nirguna Ishwara so that we come to know Aham Brahma Asmi. Here, Ishwara and Jiva difference disappears.

Having gained this knowledge I go to mananam to remove doubts or obstacles.

Finally, Nidhidhyasanam is that which removes psychological traumas in life. These

traumas don't allow us
to enjoy the divine knowledge.

So, the three put together
is Gyana Yoga. In Nirguna Ishwara, there is neither male nor
female. This Gyana
Yoga is the final Sadhana.

All five Sadhanas put
together is Bhakti Yoga. Gyana Yoga is a part of Bhakti Yoga.

Everyone has to go through
all five sadhanas. No one is born with desire to know God.
That is why Vedas
have many Sakama karmas such as Putra kameshti Yaga. Aham
Brahma Asmi is
ultimate goal.

Shlokas 1- 12: Start with sakama karma and go
through all the stages, and gain the knowledge, aham brahma
asmi; which is the
culmination of bhakthi

yoga. This is the
topic of the first twelve verses;

Shokas 13-20: Sri Krishna talks
about the nature of a person; the character of a person who
had gone through
all these five stages; successfully, or a
Para Bhakta, or an Advaita Gyani is described. This Para
bhakta is my dearest
devotee, says Sri Krishna. He is nirguna Bhakta; he has become
one with me and
I have become one with him. With this background we enter the
chapter.

Shloka # 1:

Arjuna said Those devotees who, being thus ever dedicated, meditate on You, and those again (who meditate) on the Immutable, the Unmanifested-of them, who are the best experiencers of yoga [(Here) yoga means samadhi, spiritual absorption.] ?

Chapter begins with question of Arjuna, an Anuprashnam; a question based on previous teaching. He asks, Is Saguna Bhakta superior or is Nirguna Bhakta superior?

First line of shloka: Some saguna bhaktas meditate on sgauna Ishwara with constant commitment. What type of Saguna Ishwara is meditated upon? The Saguna Ishwara as Aneka Rupa Ishwara or Vishwa Rupa Ishwara is meditated upon.

Second line: There are some other people who meditate on Akshara Ishwara or Param Brahman, the one free of all attributes or Nirguna Brahman. He is attribute-less, not perceptible to sense organs, can't hear, smell or touch; he is not objectifiable by our sense organs. On this Nirguna Brahman, some meditate upon. How can they meditate without an un-objectifiable Brahman? They do so by seeing the subject, I, as Brahman or through Atma Dhyanam.

Among them, the two groups, who is superior? Indirectly, Arjuna's question is, is Saguna Ishwara superior or Nirguna Ishwara superior?

Shloka # 2:

The Blessed Lord said Those who meditate on Me by fixing their minds on Me with steadfast devotion (and) being endowed with supreme faith-they are considered to be the most perfect yogis according to Me.

Sri Krishna answered Arjuna's question. Saguna Ishwara has objectified beauty. Many philosophers say Nirguna Ishwara does not exist. Others say it is not worth knowing. Real answer is that the question itself is wrong. For a wrong question there is no right answer. It is like asking, how many centimeters is the weight of this clip? It can't be answered, as it is not a logical question. So, when we compare two things, comparison comes only when we have to choose between the two. Thus, choice can only be between two similar things. Suppose one wants to drink something; he has a choice of tea, coffee or coke; here he has a choice. Choice can be in the type of container to drink from as well, such as cup, tumbler etc. But if you ask, do you want a tumbler or a drink; there is no choice there. Comparison is only among similar things.

Dvaitam or Saguna bhakti is a means, a stepping-stone, to reach nirguna bhakti, the goal. There is no choice, as nirguna bhakta has to go through Saguna Bhakti. Without Saguna Bhakti one can't get nirguna bhakti. This is the culmination of the Sadhana. But Sri Krishna does not want to insult Arjuna by telling him his question is

not meaningful.

So Sri Krishna says, Saguna Bhaktas are superior, while nirguna bhakta attains

Me. So everyone has to take Saguna Bhakti and then move to Nirguna bhakti.

Take away:

Bhakti Yoga is not a particular sadhana but it is an entire range of sadhanas that culminate in moksha.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy