

Bagawat Geeta, Class 47

Greetings All,

Shloka # 28:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.२८ ॥

“O Hero! On the contrary, the knower of truth of the distinction between constituents of Prakrti and their operation does not attach himself to works knowing that constituents operate amidst constituents.”

Continuing his teaching of the Gita and refreshing our memory of last class Swami Paramarthananda said Sri Krishna is talking about the duties of a Gyani, who continues to be a grihastha and who continues to be in the society. Since he is in society, he must be careful with respect to his lifestyle. He will still do things although he does not benefit from them. By performing Karma he is not benefited, nor is he affected by not performing them. Nevertheless, he has to perform Karma for society's benefit.

Difference between Agyani's action and Gyani's action are: That one acts without happiness while other acts in happiness. Gyani has discovered Atma and he is able to see Ahamkara as an insignificant and incidental I. For Agyani, Ahamkara is very important. He feels Ahamkara's ups and downs as his own. In case of Gyani although he has recognized his higher Self he does not neglect Ahamkara. He just puts it in its place.

Ahmakara as the body-mind complex is called Prakriti Guna.

Shloka # 27 describes how an ignorant person identifies with Ahamkara and is enamored with it and suffers in the process. He is a Karta and Bhogta. Bhokta always enters a mess. Having

talked about an Agyani who is lost in the ahamkara, now in this verse, Sri Krishna talks about the Gyani who sees the ahamkara and gives it its importance, but not over-importance. So Gyani is one, who knows the truth about the guṇa and karma; guṇa means prakṛti guṇa; prakṛti guṇa means ahamkara; therefore guṇa karma means ahamkara and its actions. Gyani knows the truth about ahamkara and its actions. The truth is that ahamkara can never escape from action.

Ahamkara will have to be eternally active.

The Phalam's of action can be painful. The Gyani lets Ahamkara have its own life. Ahamkara as the Prakriti Guna (body-mind complex) is material in nature. The world is also Prakriti Guna (a product of matter). The Ahamkara and world will eventually interact. This interaction produces pleasure and pain. One cannot escape them. People try to escape through drinks and drugs and get into even worse conditions. Gyani knows he has to interact with the world.

Even though he interacts with world, he is in Chaitanyam and as such is not affected. This is just as in a movie the characters do not affect the movie screen. Discover your higher self. Let Ahamkara interact with the world without affecting yourself. Gyani can observe Ahamkara objectively. Our problem is not death of body. I accept death of another body, but cannot accept my own body's or near and dear ones body's death. This is not objective. Vedanta is able to look at my own body objectively as well. Problem is not with God or World.

If nobody dies, consider all great –great- grand fathers who will be surviving. God had kept physical mortality correctly. We are not objective. Others may die, but I and mine should not, is our thinking.

In Tirupati when the Que is slow we curse, but when I am in front of God, why don't I get enough time? We look at our body

mind complex subjectively. Gyani looks at body mind complex everywhere objectively without criticism. He accepts every thing without resistance. This is Jivan Mukti. He remains detached.

Shloka # 29:

Those who are deluded by Prakrti's constituents cling to the works of these constituents. The knower of the whole ought not to destabilize the dull and partial knowers. 3.29

“Those who are deluded by Prakrti’s constituents cling to the works of these constituents. The knower of the whole ought not to destabilize the dull and partial knowers.”

Sri Krishna talks of Agyani. Agyani does not have objectivity with respect to prakriti Guna or the body-mind-complex. They want two sets of laws. One for themselves and another for others. And because of this delusion, they are totally immersed in guṇa karmasu. So they are immersed in ahamkara and its activities. So

Immersed that they have no time to even ask the question, am-I this karta& bhokta? That question does not come up because ahamkara keeps that person busy throughout his life; from boyhood, youth, adult and old age they are immersed in ahamkara without ever taking time to ask the question “Who am I?” Ahamkara keeps them busy through out their life.

What can you do? What advice can a Gyani give to an Agyani? Sri Krishna says, never ask them to renounce Karma. While Karma phalam is bondage, it is still required to ripen the Ahamkara. Karma has negatives but it also has great positives. Fruit in it’s initial stages is when the skin is raw the skin won’t peel off. But once it ripens the skin comes off easily. That is why there are four Ashramas. They are like skin to ripen a person. Once he has gone through family life, he ripens. I had five theories of growing children. Now I have five children and no theories. Once Jivatma has ripened we will get detached from everything we are attached to.

In this shoka some meanings are:

Krishnavid: Total knowledge of Ahamkara and Atma. Akrishnavid means Agyani. They know Ahamkara but not Atma.

Manda means Agyan.

Gyani should not confuse Agyani by emphasizing Sanyasa. Unripe person taking Sanyasa is not good for him or for society. Encourage him to remain in duty. Once he ripens, attachments will naturally drop off. In this ripe state you will drop a lot of things and you will do it naturally. You will grow out of attachment.

Shloka # 30:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.३० ॥

“Surrendering all works to Me in a spiritual frame of mind that craves naught, and free from all sense of possessions, fight with unconcern.”

With the previous verse, Krishna’s advice to Gyani is over; which started from the

21st verse. Krishna’s first advice was to Agyanis and the second advice is to Gyanis. Agyanis have to do karma for Chitta Shuddhiḥ; Gyanis have to do karma for loka sangrahaḥ.

Gyani’s karma is not that of a Karma yogi. Agyani’s karma is that of a karma yogi. Gyani’s duty related topic has now concluded.

In Shloka # 30, Sri Krishna comes back to Karma Yoga . Shloka # 29 was for Gyani. Shloka # 30 is now for an Agyani. It sums up Karma Yoga.

Arjuna, either way you have to perform karma Yoga. Karma Yoga

is a five-fold discipline.

They are:

1. **Adhyatma Chetasa:** Viveka Budhi or right knowledge or discrimination. It is awareness that spiritual goal is primary goal of life. The awareness that spiritual goal alone is the primary goal of life. My life is meaningful, purposeful, and valid, only if it is dedicated to the primary of spiritual knowledge or mokṣaḥ. ◌Brihadaraṇya Upanishad says that only that person whose spends his life for self-knowledge, and dies after gaining self-knowledge, only that person deserves the title brahmaṇa; Goal is to be dedicated to Moksha. It does not mean Dharma, Artha, Kama should not be pursued. These four should not be an end in itself. Our primary effort should be towards Self Enquiry.
2. **Mayi sarvaṇi karmaṇi sannyasyadhyatmacetasa.** Sri Krishna says, offer all actions at my feet with Ishwara arpana budhi. Offer everything to me. Entire creation is manifestation of God. Anything, anywhere, you offer to God becomes worship. Convert work to worship. Naturally then I do my best. The actions must be wholehearted, sincere, done without grumbling and without grudging. Even the grossest of jobs, he does with love. So therefore the second condition is worship. Convert work into a worship.
3. **Nirashi:** Being not concerned about results. Nirashi also means dropping kartr̥va. Sri Krishna does not say that one should not plan for result. Every action is towards a result. He objects to worrying about it. He says plan, implement and leave rest to God. Planning is a deliberate action at a particular time. You can also change it. Worry is something that just happens. It is a reaction. Planning makes you efficient. Worry makes you inefficient. Both are for future. Vedanta does not

criticize planning. It criticizes worrying. Swamiji, I do not want to worry; but what to do, it is there in my mind, especially when I sit in meditation. Whether Bhagavan comes or not, worry always comes first. What should I do? Worry is because of our inability to face the future. It is born out of mental weakness. Worry is our unpreparedness to face the adverse situation that may come; therefore the only solution for worry is preparedness. I have made plans and hope for the best and be prepared for the worst. Therefore, Nirashiḥ here means preparedness for the future.

4. **Nirmamaha**: Freedom from Mamakara. When success comes, I take all the credit. The moment failure happens you blame somebody else. So when your success comes, don't take credit. It is due to many factors and many hidden variables. Because they are favorable, it was a success. This was due to Bhagawan. Bhagawan is all the hidden variables put together. Be grateful to God for success. Let humility be there.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 46

Greetings All,

Shloka # 27:

कर्मणो यो नान्तरहितो भवेत्सुखदुःखसंशयान्मृत्योर्मुक्तोऽपि
कर्मणो यो नान्तरहितो भवेत्सुखदुःखसंशयान्मृत्योर्मुक्तोऽपि 3.27

Works are being done in all ways by the constituents of

Prakriti. He whose mind is deluded by egoism thinks, " I am the agent".

Continuing his teaching of Gita and recapping last week's class Swami Paramarthananda said, in beginning of chapter 3, Sri Krishna pointed out that an Agyani has to perform Karma's to purify his mind. From Shloka # 20 onwards he said even a Gyani has to perform Karma. The purpose a Gyani performs Karma is different. He performs Karma, not to purify his mind but for Lokasangraha or welfare of society. While purpose may be different both have to perform Karma.

What is the difference in Karma they perform? The first difference is an artificial one. An Agyani performs karma for happiness while a Gyani performs it with happiness. Agyani performs Karma for fulfillment while a Gyani performs it out of fulfillment. Whatever the Agyani seeks the Gyani already has.

For Gyani, Karma is a leela while for an Agyani it is a burden. In one, the tension is visible while in the other he is free of all tensions.

Now the same karma is explained from a Vedantic point of view. Everybody has a lower Self-called Ego and a higher Self-called Atma. What is Ahamkara? It is the body mind complex blessed by Atma. Atma has made Ahamkara sentient. The word Ahamkara is usually used in two contexts.

First one is as pride versus humility as in Dharama Shastra.

In the second, in Vedanta, Ahamkara means body mind complex. By nature, the body mind complex is inert Body is made up of matter, pancha bhutani, mind is also made up of matter, pancha sukshma bhutani, the only difference is body is made of gross matter, mind is made up of subtle matter, therefore the body-mind-complex, is inert material according to Vedanta. It is sentient because of borrowed sentiency. Just as a fan revolves because it is blessed by electricity that is invisible. In a

similar manner Atma Tatvam blesses the body mind complex. This borrowed body mind complex is Ahamkara. The blessing principle is Atma. Therefore we can say:

Everybody=Atma + Ahamkara.

Ego is our lower nature; Atma is our higher nature; Ego is our incidental nature; Atma is our intrinsic nature.

There are several differences between Atma and Ahamkara. They are:

1. Ahamkara is a limited entity. It is also called Alpa. While Atma is an infinite and all pervading entity. It is also called Ananta.
2. Ahamkara is Anitya and subject to arrival and departure. In sleep you don't see Ahamkara. The moment you sleep Ahamkara is resolved. Atma is however Nitya.
3. Ahamkara is subject to modifications, Savikara. While Atma is Nirvikara.
4. Ahamkara is Karta and Bhokta. Atma is Akarta and Abhokta.
5. Ahamkara is ever a Samsari producing papam and punyam. Atma is never a Samsari.

As said before every individual is a mixture of Atma and Ahamkara. Now shastra's say you can claim anyone of these two as your Self. It is your choice. If we own Ahamkara, be prepared for Samsara. It will bring all Karmas (Prarabhdha, Sanchita and Agami). There will be ups and downs. There will be no moksha.

Then what can one do? There is only another alternative like the riddle that was given to Birbal in Akbar's court. A line was drawn and he was told to shorten the line without rubbing it off. People were wondering how can one do that? Birbal said it is simple, draw another bigger line in front of that line. Even though I have not made any change to this line, the new bigger line makes it insignificant.

Ahamkara brings Samsara. So, like Birbal draw another line. Discover another Self, the higher Self. With this discovery the smaller Self looks insignificant.

The sufferings of small self appears small and insignificant in front of the great freedom the Gyani obtains. So, Gyani has discovered a higher Ananda where Samsara is insignificant. While, for the Samsari, the Agyani, everything looks big.

Swamiji explained Shloka 27 further. Some terms used in this shloka were explained.

Prakriti: means basic matter. It is the principle of Maya, a subtle form of energy.

Gunaha: means a Product.

Prakriti Gunaha: means a product of matter or material.

It may be any inert material such as cloth, book etc. In context of this shloka prakriti according to Sri Krishna means the body-mind complex. The complex itself is inert material.

Thus, per Tatva Bodha:

From the maya the five subtle elements were born.

Thereafter five gross elements were born and from the five subtle elements, the mind and other organs are created. From the gross elements, the body is created; and from the individual satva guna; the gyanendrias were created and from the total satva guna the mind is created.

Thus:

From Maya > 5 subtle elements > 5 gross elements and the body.

Even though the body mind complex is inert it is now alive due to the energy borrowed from Atma. This is called Ahamkara. Body mind complex with sentience is Ahamkara.

you don't feel the body. When the shoe fits you don't feel the presence of the shoe. It is the same with a dress.. When it fits you don't feel it. One who does not have Raga Dvesha does not feel the mind. For a Gyani the mind is not a Bharam. Since he discovered Atma, Ahamkara is not burdensome .When the mind is peaceful, it is not a burden and the Gyani is free from the mind. It means, for him, the mind is not a bharaḥ. This is called mano nashah.

It is like a roasted seed, it cannot germinate. Gyani's Ahamkara becomes more of an Alankara. It does not affect the Gyani. Siva's snake is Ahamkara become an Alankara.

Swamiji Explained Shloka # 28 further.

Gyani knows the reality.

Tatva: means reality.

Guna: means body mind complex or Ahamkara.

All the actions belong to Ahamkara. No Karma belongs to Atma. This knowledge is known as Gyanam.

Just remember the example, when I move the hand, the motion belongs to the hand alone and the light does not and cannot move. The light is there pervading all over, but it is nityah, sarvagatah, and sanatanah.

In re-birth Ahamkara travels to find another body. Atma does not travel, as it is all pervading.

Therefore, he knows Ahamkara cannot give up action. One set of actions is replaced by another set of actions.

Gyani knows actions have to continue. He lets Ahamkara continue as per the Ashrama he is in (grihasta etc.) This is the difference between a Gyani and an Agyani.

With Best Wishes,

says, he has to continue his Karmas for Lokasangraha or benefit of society. Shankaracharya says a Gyani has to perform Karmas so that society moves away from the materialistic world. So, Arjuna, perform your Karmas.

What is the difference in attitude between a Gyani performing Karmas and an Agyani performing them? Gyani performs it for benefit of society while Agyani performs it for his own benefit. The Agyani performs it with attachment while Gyani performs with detachment. Agyani does it to obtain happiness. While Gyani does it in a state of happiness. Agyani has lingering unhappiness. The main difference is in their attachment (or detachment) to the karma.

Shloka # 26:

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The integrated man of wisdom should not bewilder the mind of ignorant attached to works; performing them all, let him cause them (also) to do so.

Here, Sri Krishna gives an important advice to a Gyani.

This is an important shloka. When we study our scriptures we find a unique phenomenon. It seems to have many seeming contradictions. Meaning there are really no contradictions. Scriptures are addressing many people at different stages of spiritual evolution. Thus, a doctor cannot give a uniform advice to all his patients. This is known as Adhikari (seeker)Bheda. So, what is food for one person is poison for another; Thus, the scriptures glorify certain sadhanas for a certain group of people and the very same scriptures criticize the very same things in a different context. For example if you go to the karma kanda, the initial portion of the veda, you will find that karma is glorified very much.

Karma, at one stage it is a blessing later, however, it becomes an obstacle. A child can stay in womb only for nine

months, after that even nature ejects it. Therefore, up to the tenth month the womb is a blessing; after the tenth month, it is an obstacle for its further growth. A green fruit has a firm skin but when it ripens the skin peels off easily. That is why even a wedding is considered only an intermediary womb stage; that is why we have the four ashramas. We grow out of each one to the other.

Active life is a spiritual womb, where one serves society, performs Pancha Maha Yagna and then grows out of it. Active life is such that you may get into the whirlpool of activity, and you keep running around like catching the tail of the tiger. Now the problem is the tiger never gets tired; but after some time, you are tired. Every karma can become a tiger's tail; therefore make use of karma, and then you should know how to grow out and spend time in Vedanta Sravanam, Mananam and Nidhidhyasanam.

A Gyani has to be careful about the advice he gives. He cannot ask everybody to drop Karma. When an immature person drops his Karma he can become a Mithyachara or one who thinks only of sense pleasures. Vedanta is not for all. They have to continue with Karma.

Explaining shloka # 26, those people who are still attached to worldly activities or Artha Kama Pradhana, encourage them to enjoy legitimate pleasures. In the encouragement also introduce God along with Karma. So, pursue artha kama but also follow dharma. At an appropriate time, study scriptures. A spiritual teacher should not discourage karmas such as puja, japa etc.

Don't create conflict by encouraging renunciation. It will come naturally. The Raga and Dvesha will come with growth. Forced detachment means he will become melancholic. So, along with philosophy religion must be encouraged.

In this context Swamiji mentioned that Gayathri is the

greatest mantra of all. There is a Gayathri mantra for the initiated as well as one for the uninitiated.

The Grihasta Gyani (Vidwan) should persuade people to act. He should persuade people by example of his works. Acharyas in Mathas perform long pujas to demonstrate this. He, the Vidwan, should perform actions wholeheartedly to persuade others.

Shloka # 27:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.२७ ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.२७ ॥

Works are being done in all ways by the constituents of Prakriti. He whose mind is deluded by egoism thinks , “ I am the agent.”

Shloka # 27 and 28 are very important Shlokas. They contain the essence of all Upanishads and the Gita. Here Sri Krishna discusses the technical difference between the Gyani and Agyani's actions.

Every individual has two “I”s. One, the lower “I”, is called the ego, which is the Karta, Bhokta and is limited. This “I” is also called Ahamkara. There is another “I”, called the higher “I,” also called the Atma or Sakshi. What is this higher “I”? It is pure Consciousness, Atma or Purusha. The atma is neither male nor female. So the properties of this Consciousness are:

1. Consciousness is not a part, a property or product of the body.
2. Consciousness is an independent entity, which pervades and enlivens the body.
3. This consciousness which is different from the body, which pervades and enlivens the body, this consciousness is not limited by the boundaries of the body; the limitations of the body, dimensions of the body and it extends beyond the body.

4. This consciousness, which is an independent entity, and not limited by the dimensions of this body, does not die even when the body perishes; it is the eternal all pervading principle;

This Atma has been described in detail in chapter 2, shlokas 12-25, of the Gita. It is like the light pervading this body that illumines this hand. This light also has all properties of the Atma and is called Jyoti.

This Consciousness is the real " I". The purpose of all sadhanas is to own up to the higher " I". Hence the shloka: Asto Ma Sat Gamaya. A Gyani is one who has owned up to Aham Brahma Asmi.

What is the lower self? It is the mind. It is located in the body. It is enlivened by the higher "I". Mind by itself is inert. It is Jiva due to Chaitanya. It is called Ahamkara. This Ahamkara operating through this body, experiences sukham, duḥkham, pain and pleasure. This Ahamkara is the one that drops and takes another body.

Each one us is: Atma + Ahamkara.

The question is should we continue with Ahamkara or should we choose our right to claim the infinite? The infinite can be claimed; it is our higher "I". The higher "I" and lower "I" are two different things. Agyani remains in lower " I" and dissatisfied. He suffers Ahamkara and thus Samsara. One who has discovered the higher "I", in his vision, the problems of lower "I" seem insignificant. A Gyani is established in higher "I" . He is not disturbed.

Shloka # 27 talks of an ignorant man in Ahamkara.

Shloka # 28 talks of a wise man established in Atma.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

possessor. The six fold wealth's are: Aishwaryam (power, ruler, Ishwarabhava), Veeryam (courage), Yashaha (fame), Sree (Prosperity), Gyanam (Knowledge) and Vairagyam (Freedom from dependence). All these are present in full measure. Each is in absolute measure. Such a person is Bhagawan.

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

Shloka #23:

ॐ श्री कृष्णाय नमः । अर्जुन ! यदि कदापि मे कार्यं न करोमि, तदापि मे कार्यं करोमि ।
ॐ श्री कृष्णाय नमः । अर्जुन ! यदि कदापि मे कार्यं न करोमि, तदापि मे कार्यं करोमि । 3.23

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

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

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

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

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

is an advantage.

Shloka # 24:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.२४ ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.२४ ॥

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

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

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

1) One's inclinations or Guna Anusari karma.

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

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

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

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 43

Greetings All,

Shloka # 19:

कर्मणो यो नान्तरहितो भवेत्सुखदुःखेषु
संन्यस्तो ज्ञानयोगी ततो भवेत्सुखिनः॥3.19॥

Therefore, unattached, always do the work that has to be done; for, doing work with detachment, man attains the supreme.

Continuing his teaching of the Gita and refreshing our memory of the last class, Swami Paramarthananda said, Sri Krishna talked about the important topic of Karma Yoga from Shloka's 8 through 18. The essence of Karma Yoga can be described as giving more and taking less. A life of contribution need not only be monetary. It can even be in the form of knowledge, one's energy or even kind words. Sri Krishna looked at this way of life from different angles. They were:

Agya: Command

Yagya: Worship

Chitta Shodhakam: Preparation of mind

Dharma: Means of maintaining harmony at all levels. This includes at the individual, family, societal, and ecological

levels.

So, You have to take to a life of Karma Yoga. Since it is required for all people for spiritual progress, you, Arjuna, should also follow it. Through this you will attain the highest progress, that of Moksha.

Note that Karma yoga has to be followed by Gyana yoga to attain Moksha. Karma yoga prepares one for Gyana Yoga. Karma Yoga involves doing one's duty and maintaining harmony. As a Kshatriya you need to remove obstacles to harmony and hence you need to fight the battle.

Shloka # 20:

Janaka and others achieved perfection through works alone. At least to promote the welfare of the world, you ought to do works. 3.20

Janaka and others achieved perfection through works alone. At least to promote the welfare of the world, you ought to do works.

After hearing this Arjuna may still feel diffident. Many people say being tied to a family life makes liberation impossible. They say only Sanyasa can help us. Arjuna is also in a similar state of mind. Right now, he also wants to take Sanyasa. How can a ruler think of spirituality? Sri Krishna tells Arjuna, don't feel diffident. Even a Grihastha can attain liberation. Grihastha has the advantage that he can become a Sanyasi, while a Sanyasi cannot become a Grihastha. That is why in our culture every stage is called an Ashram. You can convert a house into an ashram. What is difference between a house and an ashram? It is the attachment that makes a difference. If attached, it becomes a house. If detached, it becomes an ashram. It is a difference caused by the person who resides in the house. Even a ruler with responsibility can attain liberation. Sri Krishna gives example of Janak Maharaja. In Brihadaranyaka Upanishad it is a dialogue between Gargya (a Brahmin) and Ajata Shatru (a Kashatriya). Ajata

Shatru teaches Brahma Vidya to Gargya. Ajat Shatru and Janaka are examples of Grihastha Ashrami's attaining liberation.

Therefore, Arjuna, continue to be a Grihastha Gyani.

And with this example, Krishna has given confidence for Arjuna and with this example the topic of karma yoga is over. Now from the 2nd line of this verse, Sri Krishna is changing into another topic. Karma yoga topic is over, with the 20th verse 1st line.

Now, a new topic starts with Shloka # 21. In Shloka's 17 and 18 respectively, Karma Yoga is shown as important for purification of mind and attaining knowledge. After liberation one does not need Karma yoga. Gyani may or may not perform Karma Yoga. He does not need to perform Karma Yoga; he can be a passive Gyani.

So, Arjuna too wants to get out of this painful Karma or duty. He can claim to be a Gyani. There is no test for a Gyani. Gyanam is the only criteria and it is not a visible one.

Anticipating this objection, Sri Krishna says, Arjuna, even if you are a Gyani, you should continue doing Karma Yoga. Even though you do not require Karma after Gyanam, for the sake of society and Dharma you need to follow Karma yoga.

In our tradition there are three sources of knowledge to know if a situation is Dharmic or not. If not we will have a let-go Philosophy (Laissez faire) or a Raga Dvesha based life also called Prakritha Purusha. It is not a life of a cultured person called Samskruta Purusha. So one goes back to Dharma Adharma life. So, how to know if it is Dharma or Adharma?

If I have to be a refined person, I should not do what I like to do; I should do what is proper. Propriety is more important. Naturally, I should know what is proper. And

I should know what is improper. So the question, what is the

source of knowing dharma and adharma? Poorva Mimamsa sutra says Vedokilam Dharmamulam or that the entire vedas are our scriptures and are the primary source of dharma-adharma jnanam..

Thus:

1) Sruthi: The Vedas are the primary source of Dharma/ Adharma Gyanam. The human being can never know totally because, human beings' knowledge is Limited.

- Smrithi: All secondary literature based upon Vedas are also a source. They have to be interpreted according to the times. The interpreters have the freedom to interpret. They must, however, have no axe to grind. Ramayana and Bhagawatham are examples of Smrithi's.
- Shishta Achara: A life led by cultured elders who show by example. They serve as role models of Dharma. They are called Shishta's. Of the three sources the Shishta Achara is the most important. Sruthi and Smrithi are only literature. Live models have greater impact on society.

Shloka # 21:

ಉತ್ತಮಃ ಕರ್ಮಃ ಕರ್ಮಣಃ ಪರಿವಾಸಃ |
ಉತ್ತಮಃ ಕರ್ಮಃ ಕರ್ಮಣಃ ಪರಿವಾಸಃ 3.21

Whatever is done by the best of men, others also do; the world conforms to the standard that he sets.

Who are Shishta's? The most powerful person is the mother. She is the greatest influence on a child. Even in the womb the child knows mothers' thoughts. It knows if it is wanted or not. Ceremonies such as Simantham are meant for welcoming the child. The child knows the atmosphere in the house.

Next role model is the father. A father should perform noble things in the house. He should not swear. A child is deeply

influenced by a father's action as well. Others will follow a good man's actions.

Shloka # 22:

मम कर्तव्यं हि सर्वथा न विद्यते ॥
अपि त्रैलोक्ये न विद्यते ॥ ३.२२ ॥

I have Arjuna! no duty whatever to discharge in all the three worlds; there is nothing I have not won, and nothing remains to be won by Me; still I ceaselessly work.

Here Sri Krishna cites himself as an example. A society that gives healthy models to children is a healthy one. One example is Anjaneya. His story is full of morals. His attitude of respect towards women is taught. Human ingenuity alone is not enough; the grace of God is essential to succeed. Hanuman's Bhakti is an example of this devotion. Lakshmana was another exemplar. He could only recognize Sita's anklet, as he never looked above her feet. They had healthy attitude towards women, wealth and society.

Elders are responsible for the next generation. So, Arjuna you too should act.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 41

Greetings All,

Shloka # 13:

“मम कर्तव्यं हि सर्वथा न विद्यते ॥
अपि त्रैलोक्ये न विद्यते ॥ ३.२२ ॥”

3.13

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Knowledge alone changes my attitude. Once I search for knowledge it makes me a seeker.

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

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

Shloka # 14:

“ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३ ॥ १४ ॥”

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३ ॥ १४ ॥”

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

What is dharma? That which maintains the harmony of the creation is called Dharma. We are not isolated beings; we are all integrated and interconnected with other beings. Beings include humans, animals, plants, rivers etc. As said before all beings, other than humans, are programmed to live in harmony. Only human beings have been given free will and budhi shakthi. Humans can destroy this world or create a heaven out of it. If earth is destroyed, it will be due to human beings alone. Even a tiger cannot do it, but humans can do it.

Arjuna, you may not believe in God or my commandment, even then you have to lead a life of Karma Yoga to maintain harmony

of this creation. Science shows we are all interconnected. Sri Krishna says, everything that happens in creation is cyclical, indicating harmony. Thus, we have the Water cycle, Carbon dioxide cycle etc., all required for conservation of matter and energy. Sri Krishna then cites one such cycle as an example.

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

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

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

My very existence and I come from Karma. Karma is also born out of me. So, we have to keep contributing to society. Live a life of contribution.

Karmabhutaha means Karma is born out of living beings.

Shloka # 15:

“ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥”

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.१५ ॥”

How do you know which karma maintains balance and which violates balance? Human beings have a limited intellect. We do not always know what is good or bad for humanity. We produced PFC's, refrigerants that react and deplete the ozone layer. Ozone protects us from UV rays of the sun. Similarly, with increase of cars it causes greenhouse gases that in turn melt the polar ice cap increasing the flooding of our shorelines. We do not see the connection between increased cars on the roads and our receding shorelines. This is because of the limited capacity of our minds.

Shastras say do not depend on human intellect rather depend on scriptures. Scripture is not a product of human beings. They are revelations to Rishi's. So, follow the life style prescribed by scriptures says, Sri Krishna. We have been using Tulsi leaf, neem leaf etc for a long time while now Americans are taking patents on them. Sri Krishna says, harmonious life is taught by Vedas.

In this shloka, Brahma means Vedas.

The question comes how do Vedas know? Sri Krishna says, Vedas are not a product of human intellect. They have withstood the test of time. They can stand the challenge of science as well. A defect in Vedas is we do not understand them well enough. Coconut oil was once criticized and today it is praised. It is the same with Ghee.

Vedas have come out of Aksharam or Ishwara.

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

however, is to be totally avoided. The attitude must be appropriate. Dedicating selfless actions and selfish actions with an attitude of Devarpanam to God and anything I receive in life must be with Prasada Budhi.

Sri Krishna is looking at it from different angles.

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

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

Sri Krishna also used fear, as a method, to follow Karma Yoga. He, however, prefers love and worship rather than fear. Karma Yoga performed out of love is called Yagna. What God has given you, this body, this life etc., is his gift. When we get a gift we should reciprocate. What you do with the God's gift is your gift to the Lord. The body is a gift. I can enjoy the body living a life of indulgence or I can use it for Paropkara. Trees produce lot of fruits, as a gift. Even if one throws stones at them they still keep giving their fruits. The cow produces milk all for sacred purposes, our coffee and our tea. The rivers carry water, all for blessing the society. From looking at nature, we can easily understand why God has given this body; therefore "Paropkarartham Idam Shariram". It means this body's purpose is to help others. Therefore, when I utilize my body to serve the world; when I utilize the mind to give love to others; when I utilize my intellect to share my

knowledge with others that will become the worship of the Lord. And for this worship of the Lord, I am going to get the greatest benefit and what is that benefit? Sri Krishna says that when I lead such a life I get all four purusharthas that is Dharma, Artha , Kama and Moksha without asking for it. So the second angle is to convert life into worship of Lord.

Shloka # 12:

“देवैर्भुज्यते यो यथा कर्मैर्भुज्यते भुज्यते च यो यथा
भुज्यते च यो यथा भुज्यते भुज्यते च यो यथा भुज्यते च यो यथा

भुज्यते च यो यथा भुज्यते च यो यथा भुज्यते च यो यथा 3.12”

“The Devas nourished by sacrifices will give you the enjoyments you seek. Verily he is a thief who enjoys without giving back to the Devas (a share of) the gifts given by them.”

Here, Sri Krishna says, when you lead such a life of worship, God will give you everything. Such a Karma Yoga gives both material and spiritual benefits. It is a two for one program, says Swamiji. Which one you want is your choice. All people are not interested in moksha. He says, some people tell him that they have young children and have to work for them and are not interested in moksha. Sri Krishna says, there is nothing wrong in a material life. He only cautions that one should use Karma Yoga to fulfill one’s material goals. Don’t take short cut methods. God’s will give you everything. All deities will bless you when they are worshipped through karma Yoga.

Citing an example Swamiji says, When I follow Karma Yoga I don’t exploit nature to feed my greed. The natural harmony is maintained. The seasons are maintained. Our lives are dependent on rains. “ When green goes from city, it is red”, meaning air pollution increases and it becomes dangerous. A society is a healthy one when Dharmic people are allowed to follow dharma.

Follow Karma Yoga and God will grant you all blessings.

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

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

Citing another example Swamiji says he read recently that many temples have lands and properties assigned to them so that the temple can be maintained. However, unscrupulous people rent temple lands for one paisa. They are educated people too and they are abusing it. Many have not even paid their rent in a long time. Sri Krishna says one who enjoys without reciprocity such a person is a thief.

In our culture, whatever we cook, we should offer it as a Naivedyam or as an acknowledgement. It is not an offering. God does not take it anyway. He just wants thanks.

In Hinduism every moment of our life is a life of reverence. Others have secular work and non-secular work. In Hinduism every action is sacred action. Every car driver before starting his journey prays; before starting construction of a building a Bhumi puja is performed. Swamiji says Non-reverential work is Karma while reverential work is Karma Yoga.

Shloka # 13:

“ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.१३ ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.१३ ॥

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.१३ ॥”

“ Good men who partake of what remains after offering sacrifices are liberated from all sins; whereas the sinners who cook for their own sake live on their sins”.

Sri Krishna now looks at karma yoga from a third angle.

The first angle was as God’s commandment

The second angle was as God’s worship or Yagna.

The third angle is as a spiritual purifier or Chitta Shodhakam.

A seeker of moksha can appreciate this angle. When I am a seeker, there is only one path and that is by Atma Gyanam. Without this Gyanam I cannot obtain Moksha. Gyanam occurs only with mental purity. That is why before installing a God in temple purification is performed. Similarly, before study of scriptures one has to go through Upanayanam; to cleanse the body and mind to install the Veda Mantra; else I will pollute the Vedas. Upanayanam is very important for Vedic chanting. Even a pucca Brahmin cannot learn Vedas without Upanayana samskara. To paint a wall one has to sandpaper the wall first. Atma Gyanam occurs only when Kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada and matsarya (lust, anger, greed, illusion, pride and envy) are removed. So, Karma yoga is the sand paper to cleanse the

mind. The seeker of Karma Yoga is not interested in material prosperity. The whole world may consider him a failure because it considers material prosperity as the basis of success. Karma Yogi does not consider material success as important. His focus is on inner purification irrespective of whether material prosperity comes or not. Hence the shloka:

Isvararpitam necchaya krrtam
cittasodhakam muktisadhakam

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

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

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

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

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

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

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 39

Greetings All,

Shloka # 9:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १८.९ ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १८.९ ॥

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

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

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

Proper Attitude:

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

Thus, Proper Action + Proper Attitude= Karma Yoga.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thus,

Action + Devotion= Liberating factor.

Action-Devotion=Binding factor.

Action + Devotion=Yagya, a liberator

Action – Devotion=Karma, a binder.

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

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

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

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

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

Shloka # 10:

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

“Bringing forth creatures together with sacrifice, the Lord of creatures said of old: multiply by means of sacrifices; let it yield whatever work you seek.”

A life of sacrifice is prescribed by the vedas themselves for the harmony and progress of the society. Such a life of contribution; such a life of sacrifice; such a life

of sharing called the Yagna way of life, is prescribed by the vedas themselves for our own benefit.

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

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

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

A human being can lead an ideal life of giving and sharing, based upon freewill. Therefore humans can get the greatest benefit of moksha; or they can create a hell for themselves as well.

With life of Yagya, may you prosper. Swamiji then discussed a life of competition versus cooperation. In competition one

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

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

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

Shloka # 11:

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

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

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

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

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

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

With Best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 38

Greetings All,

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

Karma + Yoga= Karma Yoga.

Here Karma is proper action and Yoga is proper attitude.

Proper Action (karma)

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Deva Yagya: My contribution to Devas.
- Pitra Yagya: My contribution to Forefathers.
- Bramha Yagya: My contribution to scriptures and Guru Parampara.
- Manushya Yagya: My contribution to human beings.
- Bhuta Yagya: My contribution to environment, animals, plants etc.

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

Proper Attitude (Yoga)

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

Even food should be offered to God first and then taken. This is all done to bring about an attitudinal change called

Bhavana. Even the mundane task of cleaning a desk, do it as an offering to God. Once I make it an offering to God, I will do it wholeheartedly because I will not do anything inferior for God. If you do it in this manner, you will do the task well and wholeheartedly, as a Karta.

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

With this proper attitude, when I perform every action as an offering to God, I will not worry if it is pleasant or unpleasant. All our actions may not be that pleasant. Swamiji says we do perform unpleasant actions. If I have to take care of my old parent who is not that well, it is a duty. But it may not be pleasant, as it will involve money and inconvenience. Some such person may even pray for the speedy demise of that parent.

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

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

Prasada Budhi: Whatever the fruits, I accept it with complete grace, without any complaints. Whenever I don't get the expected result we tend to think of God as unjust. Whatever God gives is a just result of Prarabdha Karma. We should keep in mind that results often come from previous lives as well. When a local cricket umpire gives his decision it is accepted

without question. If so, why can't you accept the decision of the universal umpire? This includes the decision of death as well. Whatever God gives, accept it. **When I am not able to accept it, pray to God to give me the strength to be able to accept it.** Budhi in this shloka means attitude.

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

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

Shloka # 8:

कर्मणो यो नान्तरात्फलं प्रीतिं च तदात्मनो
कर्मणो यो नान्तरात्फलं प्रीतिं च तदात्मनो ३.८

“Always do prescribed work; work is superior to inaction. Indeed, even life in the body is impossible without working.”

Action is always superior to inaction. In inaction mind is idle and it becomes the devils workshop. Only a Gyani can remain idle. Citing example of two quiet people who were in an ashram, one felt the ashram was quiet. The other felt it was a like cremation ground. Both people experience quietude differently.

If you resort to inaction, living in the world will be very difficult. Even if you have everything you need, you will still have to act to maintain your body. So, Arjuna, perform action. Perform the actions prescribed in the scriptures. The Pancha Maha Yagya's prescribed are compulsory. You have to contribute to society. It can be through teaching, giving food, giving your time and even smiling at people. Somebody said, “People come from miles to get a smile”.

The Pancha Maha Yagya's can be seen from different angles. It

is a commandment from Lord. It is like following a traffic rule. Mature people will follow the law, as it is good for society. Citing JFK “ Don’t ask what your country can do for you, ask what can you do for your country”? Immature person may not follow the law, hence this commandment. If you don’t perform the Karmas or omitting your duties you will get special Papam called Prathyavaya Papam and will fall down spiritually. Hence, the language of threat used, by scriptures.

Shloka # 9:

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

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

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

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

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

Shankara says in Soundarya Lahiri: Oh! Mother, wherever I go,

take it as pradakshanam. So also, whatever you are eating, make it an offering to God.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

person and he should at least talk to him. He asked the Quiet Swamiji why he should get Prasadam for doing nothing. The Quiet Swamiji told him: My doing nothing is very good for the

society. He said sitting quiet was not very easy and requested the officer to try it at least for a week. The officer thought it would be very easy and agreed. Once he sat with the Quiet Swamji for some time, he got restless. After a few hours of quiet time he became extremely restless and gave up. He told the Pujari to give the Quiet Swamiji a double quota of Prasadam daily. Giving up action is not easy. Our gunas and svabhava will pressurize us to act.

3) Not only will action not result in moksha but it can also become a risky proposition. When there are no goals or plans in mind, the mind does not have anything to do, especially since he does not have Gyanam. An idle mind is ideal for seeking many types of enjoyments. In one's mind and imagination too one can enjoy a lot. He then violates Sanyasa and the suppressed emotions erupt. Such a person, wearing an ochre robe, declares himself to be a saintly person to the world, while in reality he is caught up in his sense world. This is called "Mithyachara", meaning what I am thinking, the society does not know. Such a person is also called a "Vimudatma" or a hypocrite. So, Arjuna, considering that inaction is dangerous, lead an active life.

Shloka # 7:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.७ ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.७ ॥

"Controlling the sense organs with the mind, he who commences the Yoga of action with the organs of action, unattached, is held to excel, O Arjuna."

What is an ideal Ashrama? As per Sri Krishna, it is Grihasthashrama, where one can fulfill Artha, Kama as well as perform Service to society. Even a wife is called saha dharma charani, which means one gets married not primarily for fulfilling the Artha Kama desires, but for primarily fulfilling my service to the society. In this process I

also fulfill my personal desires in a legitimate manner. And therefore, Sri Krishna says, it is better for one to remain in society.

What is an ideal life to lead? As a Grihastha, as an active person in society, let him regulate his sense organs first and then fulfill his artha & kama. Artha means security, money, possessions, house, status etc. name, fame all related to security while and Kama means entertainment. Shastras give freedom to fulfill the Artha & Kama desire only in Grihasthasrama and not in Sanyasasrama. Sanyasa is exclusively meant for fulfilling moksha desire only. Therefore Grihastha should fulfill his desires by regulating the sense organs and without violating dharma and morality.

Citing example of pickle, sometimes we forget that pickle is only a side dish and indulge in it as if it were the main dish. So too, in such a life, Dharma should dominate and not Artha and Kama. Giving must be more than receiving. This is a Dharmic Purusha. Sensory excesses should be controlled by a discriminating mind. It does not mean suppression. Shastras are against suppression. Citing example of a river, stopping the flow of a river will not help, it will cause flood. If you don't stop the flow of water, it will be wasted. Therefore the correct thing to do is to regulate the water by channeling it in a useful direction. Swamiji used the Tamil Saying to further inform us. Kan pona pokkile manam pokalama, manam pona pokkile manitan pokalama; (Should the mind follow whatever the eyes see; and should a man follow his wandering mind?)

After this the Grihastha should take to Karma Yoga that too without getting attached to anything. Whatever he uses is only a means. Shastras say Grihasthasrama is not an end in itself. A wife or husband, both are not permanent. I have to grow out of all my attachments, including for my family, before Yama comes. Such a Grihastha excels a Sanyasi who is not mature and is without knowledge. Sanyasa is horrible if

you do not know Vedanta.

Shloka # 8:

कर्मण्येवाङ्गक्ष्यते न कर्मणो हि क्लेशो भवति ॥ ४७ ॥

3.8

“Always do prescribed work; work is superior to inaction. Indeed, even life in the body is impossible without working.”

In the previous shloka Sri Krishna says Karma Yoga is the best path. However shastras do make an exception for one to skip Karma (Grihastha) and go to Gyana Yoga (Sanyasa). The exception occurs when a person has performed Karma Yoga in a previous life.

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

Karma +Yoga=Karma Yoga

Karma here means proper action.

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

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

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

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

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

Karma Yoga should be primarily Satvic and Nishkama Karma. Shastras prescribe some of these Nishkama Karmas. They are known as Pancha Maha Yagna's. Performing the Pancha Maha Yagna makes our spiritual progress very fast. They purify one's mind. They reduce one's Raga, Dvesha, Kama and Krodha. The Pancha Maha Yagna's are:

1. Deva Puja: Life should consist of religious activity or worship. This may depend upon your Jathi, Varna etc. Sandhyavandanam, Rama Nama Japam all fall into this category. This is dedicating exclusive time for Devas. It is treating Devas as guests. It can also be called prayer time.
2. Pithru Puja: Worship of forefathers. Scriptures give great importance to this puja. Some time should be allocated for this. The ancestor worship can be as per family tradition.
3. Rishi or Brahma Yagna: This is the worship of scriptures. We have a glorious tradition. We have to do something to preserve it and propagate it. Daily Parayanam or study of scripture such as Ramayanam falls under this yagna. Our Gita class is a part of Brahma Yagna. We are also responsible for handing over these teachings to posterity. We should share it with children through daily study. There are ritualistic ways of performing Brahma Yagna as well. In this process we also remember the Rishi Parampara (all Rishi's) who have brought down to this day the knowledge of our scriptures for our benefit.
4. Manushya Yagna: All types of social services fall under

this Yagna. Feeding the poor, giving time to orphanages, giving time to old age homes, schools, etc., all fall under this Yagna. Feeding hungry is the primary Manushya Yagna also called Anna Danam.

5. Bhoota Yagna: This is protection of the environment and all other beings such as animals, plants, the water, air and the earth. This is the reason our scriptures show the animals as Vahanas of Devas. The story of Shakunthala makes the message clearer. Shakuntala, when she had to leave the ashrama of Rishi Kanva, she takes leave of all people, the plants, and even the deer. One particular deer was very dear to her. It pulled her dress, not allowing her to leave. Even the trees bowed their head down. Shakuntala had won the hearts of all by her service.

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

Take away from this class:

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

With Best wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy