

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 3

Greetings All,

Continuing his introduction to the Upanishad, Swami Paramarthananda said, in the last class he pointed out that among many Upanishads ten are most important due to Shankaracharya writing commentaries on them. All of them are chosen from the Vedas. Taittiriya Upanishad is from Yajur Veda. Yajur veda has two branches. Krishna Yajur and Shukla Yajur veda. Katho and Taittiriya Upanishads are from Krishna Yajur Veda. Ishavasa and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads are from Shukla Yajur Veda. Taittiriya Upanishad occurs at the end of of Taittiriya Aranyakam. This Aranyakam has 10 chapters. The last 4 chapters are philosophical ones. The famous Suktanamaskra or Aruna Prashna occurs in Taittiriya Aranyakam. Last four chapters 7,8, 9 and 10 of the Aranyakam are called Taittiriya Upanishad. Shankaracharya has commented on chapters 7, 8 and 9 only. He did not comment on the last chapter 10 called Mahanarayanam. Taittiriya and Ishavasa Upanishads have an uniqueness to them. They are used for pararayanam due to their swaras or intonation. They were preserved in the sampradaya of chanting. Mundako and Keno upanishad's were not preserved in the sampradaya of chanting. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad also has swaras but they are not very popular.

Two reasons are given as to how the name Taittiriya Upanishad has come about.

The first story comes from the Puranas or is of mythological origins and is considered more a symbolic one. Once there was a sage by name of Vaishampayana and he had a great disciple by the name of Yagnavalkiya. Yagnavalkiya was a brilliant student. On one occasion he insulted one of his classmates. Vaishampayana came to know about it. He knew Yagnavalkiya had a big ego. He wanted to punish him. He asked Yagnavalkiya to return all the Vedas taught to him. Yagnavalkiya vomited all

the food he had eaten and in that vomit all Vedas were surrendered as well. He lost all the wisdom he had learnt. In the vomit was also all his well-digested knowledge. A bird also digests its food and feeds that to its young. All the Rishi's who were with Yagnavalkiya thought it would be a great idea if they could become birds and eat his vomit, so that they would get the wisdom very quickly. So all Rishi's converted themselves to Tittiri birds (partridge) and they ate up his vomit. The Tittiri bird is small but it can consume a lot of food. Thus, all the Rishi's gained wisdom. It is said that because the vomit was mixed with some blood it had become dark or "Krishna", hence this knowledge is known as Krishna Yajur Veda. Later, Yagnavalkiya learnt the Vedas from Surya Bhagavan and he created the Shukla Yajur Veda. All the Rishi's who got their wisdom from the vomit, taught others the Krishna Yajur Veda and thus the Veda spread.

The symbology in this story is that Yagnavalkiya's vomit was like teaching the students a second time. Brilliant students usually grasp information very fast or the very first time. Others, slower students, need more time. It was not unusual for a teacher to ask his brilliant student to teach the slower students or his Co-brahmachari's. So, Yagnavalkiya is supposed to have taught the students who were also very eager to learn. The Tittiri bird also symbolizes a desire to learn quickly. Thus, like a Tittiri bird they received their teaching.

The second story is a simpler one. There was a Rishi named Taittiri. It was an Acharyas name not that of a bird. He was from Yajur veda paramapara. Hence, the name of the Upanishad.

This Upanishad has 3 sections that were commented upon by Shankaracharya. He did not comment on the fourth section. The last or fourth section (chapter) is the Narayanavalli and it is usually chanted while welcoming a Sanyasi. Each of the three chapters or sections is named after the very first word used in the chapter.

Thus, chapter 1, beginning with word Shiksha, is called Shikshavalli.

The chapter 2 begins with Brahma and is called Brahmavalli.

Chapter 3 begins with Brighu and as such is called Brighuvalli.

Fourth chapter is called Narayanavalli but it is not studied.

First and third chapters are not dealing with Vedanta. Vedanta occurs only in chapter 2 and is the most important one. Shankaracharya's commentary on this chapter is very famous. Chapters 1 and 2 are about preparation for gaining Gyanam and deal with Karma Yoga and Upasana.

These two subjects are discussed in chapters 1 and 3. Between these three chapters they have two shanti pathas. First chapter has a Shanti patha and chapters 2 and 3 together have another shanti patha. The invocation Sahana Vavatu comes from this shanti patha.

Shikshavalli or chapter 1:

The Shanti patha:

May Mitra be propitious to us. May Varuna bless us. May the blessings of Aryama be with us. May the grace of Indra and Brihaspathi be upon us. May Vishnu, the all pervading (wide-striding) be propitious to us. Salutations to Brahman. Salutations to Thee O Vayu! Thou art the visible Brahman. Thee alone shall I consider as the visible Brahman. I shall declare: Thou art the "Right"; Thou art the "Good". May that protect me; may that protect the speaker. Please protect me. Please protect the speaker.

Through shanti patha students are asking for Gyana Yogyatha prapthihi. All of my organs must be in a fit condition to receive knowledge. The 17 organs (The karmendriyas, Gyanendriyas etc.) should also cooperate. During Sravanam my

gyanendriyas must be active, not Karmendriyas. I must obtain Karana योग्यता प्रप्तिहि. Each organ has a Devata. I invoke these devatas so that they keep my organs fit. Various Devatas are mentioned in prayers. Prayers ask that there be no obstacles. Parthibandha Nibhadhyathi.

In this shanti patha following seven gods are invoked. They are:

Mitra: God of exhalation (outbound breath)

Varuna: Apana: God of inhalation

Aryama or Surya: God of the Eyes.

Indra: God of the hand.

Brihaspati: God of wisdom, intelligence and communication. The ability to communicate and ask questions is important. Precision and brevity in communication is required.

Urukrama or Vishnu: Is God of the feet or the ability to move and sit. Urukrama means one with big strides.

Vayu: is the Hiranyagarbha Devata or the Total subtle body. It is not visible. The visible part is Prana or Vayu. Samashti Prana is Vayu. It is total Sukshma shariram.

He is the Mangala Karta perceptible through the breath in our nostrils.

Students invoke these seven gods for auspiciousness, strength and Mangala Karta. This prayer includes prayer for fitness of teacher as well. It prays for teacher's organs and memory as well.

Naha: Student and teacher.

Namaha: Prostrating to Hiranyagarbha Tatva as it includes all Devatas or the Totality.

Hence, we worship the Pancha Maha Bhutas of Prithvi, Jalam, Vayu, Agni, and Akash Tatvam. All are worshipped during Sandhya Vandanam as well.

You are the perceptible God. I want to spread the good news.

Ritum: Living a life according to my studies. Not being a hypocrite.

Satyam: Since I should act according to my knowledge, my knowledge should be the right understanding. My knowledge should be right. It should be Right knowledge in keeping with Shastra, Reasoning and my Experience. When these three sources of knowledge are right, I have right knowledge. **Satyam is Right knowledge.**

Ritum and Satyam are embodied in Hiranyagarbha. All these are prayers for Yogya Prapthihi.

Prathibandha Nivritihi: means May god protect me. Let the obstacles go away. May God bless the Guru (Vaktaram) as well.

The Shantihi is chanted three times for removal of obstacles. These obstacles are Adhidaivika (of divine origin), Adhibhautika (originated in the physical, material beings) and Adhyatmika (created by ourselves).

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Foot Note:

Karmendriyas:

1.pāyu – the excretory organ.

Is the organ of excretion. Associated with the mooladhara chakra and the earth element.

2.upastha – the sexual organs

This is the generative organ.

Legs are the locomotory organs.

4.pāṇi – the organ of apprehension

Hands are the most complex organ of action as they can express, feel and touch.

5.vāk – the speech organ

Gyanendriyas: are the five sense organs :1. ghrāṇa – nose
2.rasanā – tongue 3.cakṣu – eye 4.tvak – skin 5.śrotra – ear

Panchamahabhoothas:

- 1)Prithivi (earth) corresponds to the mooladhara chakra
- 2)Apas or Jala (water) corresponds to the Svadhistana chakra
- 3)Agni (fire) corresponds to the manipura chakra
- 4)Vayu (air) corresponds to the anahata chakra
- 5)Akasha (ether) corresponds to the vishuddha chakra.

Bagawat Geeta, Class 70: Chapter 5, Verses 3 to 7

Shloka # 3:

[illegible]

Know him to be a perpetual renouncer who neither shuns nor seeks, O mighty-armed! One who is above such contraries is really liberated from bondage.

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said that the teaching of previous three chapters was that there is no choice between Karma Yoga and Gyana Yoga. The Spiritual Sadhanas are:

- Gyana Yoga for liberation and
- Karma Yoga for preparation of mind.

All forms of sadhanas including Patanjali's yoga of meditation come under these sadhanas. Even Bhakti Yoga, depending on the type of practice, comes under one of these two sadhanas. When Bhakthi yoga is understood as pooja, or any type of saguna dhyanam it will come under karma yoga. When bhakti yoga is performed as a Shastric study, it becomes Gyana Yoga, a higher level of Bhakti Yoga. Thus, Bhakthi yoga is common to both karma yoga and gyana yoga. Lower level of bhakthi yoga is called karma yoga. Higher level of bhakthi yoga is called Gyana yoga; there is no exclusive bhakthi yoga, separate from Karma yoga and Gyana yoga. Therefore, all the sadhanas will fall within these two alone.

Regarding life style, Sri Krishna says, there is a choice. We can be in society and follow both sadhanas or be out of society and follow both sadhanas. There is even a third choice in lifestyle. One can follow karma Yoga as a Grihasta then become a Sanyasi and follow Gyana Yoga. This third option is the one preferred by the Vedas.

The question is asked, how can one follow spirituality in Grihasthashrama where there are so many distractions? Sri Krishna says, in itself there is nothing wrong with Grihasthashrama. **The primary problem for a Grihasta is Raga and Dvesha.** We have expectations about everything, our children, wife, house, friend etc. One has an ideal in mind and when others do not meet that ideal, one is disturbed. We need to manage our Raga Dvesha. Such a person is a Nithya Sanyasi.

The advantage of Sanyasahrama is that the Sanyasi has no attachments. Therefore, he usually has a light mind. Even a Grihasta can enjoy a light mind if he does not have Raga and Dvesha.

Citing king Janaka as a model of Grihasthashrama, once the king was with his Guru amidst other Sanyasis. The Sanyasis looked down upon the King, as he was a Grihasta. The Guru wanted to teach the Sanyasis a lesson. He created an illusory fire in the ashram and immediately all Sanyasi's ran to protect their possessions. When they came back they found the king still sitting alone listening to the Guru's teaching. Swamiji says, wearing a saffron robe does not guarantee Sanyasa. Therefore, even a Grihasta can be a Sanyasi internally.

Swamiji clarified that Sri Krishna is not saying that one should not have Raga Dvesha. Human beings will have likes and dislikes. Even Gods have their likes and dislikes. See how Sri Krishna loves his flute and Saraswathi Devi loves her Veena and Sri Ganesha loves his carrier, the Mouse. Preferences in life will be there. Our personality is actually defined by our preferences or likes and dislikes. Sri Krishna, however says, do not become a slave to Raga and Dvesha. If you can fulfill them fine, if not convert it into a non-binding desire. What is a non-binding desire? Citing through an example, it is not unusual for a parent to dream of a child becoming an IAS officer. They try everything to help the child in this process. However, in the end, the child could become a Sanyasi. Sri Krishna says, have dreams; but be ready to face whatever happens; this is called management of ragah-dvesha. If you have this capability you are a Sanyasi.

0 Arjuna, one who has managed the Dvandas (pairs of opposites or Raga Dvesha), he will definitely attain Moksha even in Grihasthashrama. Even such a person will have to follow Karma yoga and then come to Gyana Yoga.

Shloka # 4:

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The thoughtless, not men of discrimination, affirm that Samkhya and Yoga are different. Properly resorting to either of them, one wins the fruit of both.

Sri Krishna concludes by saying that both ashramas are equally efficacious. He calls Grihasthashrama as Pravritthi marga and Sanyasashrama as Nivritthi marga. Sri Krishna has combined the four ashramas into two. Thus, Grihasthashrama includes Bramhacharya and Sanyasashrama includes Vanaprastha. Both ashramas are good and neither is superior. Only an ignorant person will say that one of them is superior or that they are not equal. A wise person will certainly not say such a thing.

There is in Grihasthashrama a guru shishya paramapara as there is one in Sanyashrama as well. And in fact, among all the Upanishads, the most important portion is called **tatvamasi prakaranam**, where the teaching of tatvamasi comes. This teaching usually took place between a father and son. Thus, the scriptures talk about the Grihasthashrama Gyani parampara, as well as Sanyasashrama Gyani parampara. That these two paramparas existed indicate that you can get Gyanam in any of the ashramas.

In both ashramas Gyanam is possible. Sri Krishna advises that one should take the ashrama most suitable to one's inclinations and Prarabhda Karmas.

Many factors influence the type of ashrama one chooses. But once a choice is made one should follow the requirements of that ashrama implicitly. It is very important that finally the inner transformation occurs. Gyanam is also the goal of a Grihastha Sanyasi.

Shloka # 5:

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The status won by the Samkhyas is attained by the Yogins also.

Only he perceives who perceives that Samkhya and Yoga are one.

Here again Sri Krishna reinforces the same ideas.

Samkhya Sanyasi's do attain moksha following Karma Yoga and then Gyana yoga. Purificatory sadhanas are many including the Sanyasi's Danda. A sanyasi does not have sacred thread he uses a danda instead. A danda puja is also performed daily. Both Sanyasi and Grihasta attain moksha through purification.

While both ashramas are equally efficient each has its plus and minus points exactly like having your own house versus a rented house. The one who sees this fact, that person alone, sees that other people have wrong perceptions.

Sri Krishna says all this so that Arjuna does not run away from the battlefield. Arjuna, on the other hand, somehow or the other wants to run away. There is a tension between the two. If Sri Krishna says sanyasa ashrama is superior then Arjuna will run away; therefore he says that the one who sees both as equal, he alone has got the right vision.

Shloka # 6:

संन्यासोऽथवा योगो ब्रह्मसंन्यासोऽथवा योगः
संन्यासोऽथवा योगो ब्रह्मसंन्यासोऽथवा योगः 5.6

Indeed, renunciation, mighty armed! Is hard to win without Karma Yoga. With Yoga, the silent sage attains Brahman without much delay.

Sri Krishna now adds some new information. He has already said that both ashramas are equal and efficient. This is like asking which subject is better, physics or chemistry? All sciences are equally important. Now, if I have to choose one of them it is because of my mental make up and inclination. One of them may be more conducive. Some places are humid and others very dry. Some may prefer one or the other. In this context, a prepared mind is better for Sanyasa. An unprepared

mind may feel very lonely in Sanyasa. There will be nobody to ask him how he feels.

Citing an example, an Indian couple was residing in a small town USA. The lady was a housewife and was often left alone. Due to loneliness she gradually became clinically depressed. Her house was a not a silent ashrama rather it was the silence of an Shmashana (cremation ground). After some time they came back to India. Here, now, she feels much better although it is very noisy.

So, to enjoy Sanyasahrama one needs a level of mind that is different. So, only a contemplative person and one who likes Maunam, a Muni, will find it compatible. Such a person, by practicing Yoga, will attain moksha before long. So, Sri Krishna says, for majority of people, Grihasthashrama is the best choice. Sanyasahrama should be taken up only with advice of a Guru and consent of the shishya.

It is when this is not followed that one reads of the many problems with Sanyasi's today.

Shloka # 7:

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Established in Yoga, his mind purified, his self and senses controlled, his Self becomes the Self of all living beings, he is not tainted though he works.

Upto shloka # 7, it was a comparative study of the two ashramas. While both are considered good, a life of activity is considered better. Now, Sri Krishna talks of Sadhanas that both Grihastha and Sanaysi have to practice. What are those sadhanas? This shloka is all about sadhanas and the actions one has to take in his ashrama. Sri Krishna talks of Grihasthashrama first, as he prefers it.

Stages:

1. Karma Yoga Yukta: Become a karma Yogi as described in chapter # 3. Such a person is one who balances materialistic pursuit with spiritual pursuit. He does not spend all his time going after material aspects of life.

Every individual is a mixture of matter (anatma) and spirit (atma). One should find time to pursue Pancha Maha Yagna for inner growth. There is nothing wrong in acquiring money. However, one should also pursue Dharma and Moksha and not only Artha and Kama. One may have to climb the corporate ladder initially, but at some point he must change to spirituality. In his last stages attention should be given totally to spirituality. Pray to God that just as a mango ripens and once ripe, falls, while initially I am stuck with worldly things, later I should be able to detach and become spiritual. This is called Yoga Yuktatvam. What I am is more important than what I have. If one can understand this itself one has become a Karma Yogi.

Vishudhatma in the shloka is one who depends less on external factors. Dependence is Samsara. Independence is moksha. Thus, less dependence psychologically is Vairagyam. Thus, detachment is purity. Raga Rahit Atma is same as Vishudhatma, which is same as Vairagyam.

Take Away:

We have expectations about everything, our children, wife, house, friend etc. One has an ideal in mind and when others do not meet that ideal, one is disturbed. This is Raga Dvasha. We have to overcome this.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 1

Greetings All,

Introduction:

Starting his teaching of the Upanishad, Swami Paramarthananda said, as a general introduction he wanted to recollect from his previous discussions on Upanishads. Basic scriptures are called Vedas also known as sources or instruments of Knowledge. They are four in all. They are further divided into two parts. First part is known as Veda Poorva while second part is known as Veda Anta.

Veda Poorva, also known as Karma Kanda, is dedicated to a wide variety of karmas or rituals. All these karmas are broadly classified into three categories. They are:

1. Kayika Karamani: Physical body plays a big part in them.
2. Vachika Karmani: Are in the form of Japas and Parayanams.
3. Manasika Karmani: It is purely through meditation.

All these karmas are also known as Upasanas. Scriptures prescribe these three karmas for obtaining different types of karmaphalams. Therefore, these three karmas are also known as Sadhanas or means of obtaining different aims in life. Karma Kandas also calls them as Sadhana Trayam. These Sadhanas can produce end results called Sadhyams for our benefit. While there are many goals, these goals have been classified into three or the Sadhya Trayam. They are:

- Upadhi Prapthihi: Goals of improving our organs of pleasure, better health, better sense organs, improved mental faculty (intelligence and memory) etc. Thus, the Samidadhanam required to be performed by a Brahmachari is for improved memory and intelligence. It is also for improved emotional health, (shantihi), for intellectual health (shradha) etc. Overall purpose is to improve instruments of living and enjoyment or improving oneself.

Now, once you feel further improvement is not possible, due to age, health etc., then one can pray for another good body in the next birth as well. This too is Upadhi prapthihi.

- Vishaya Prapthihi: Is to improve objects of enjoyment. Thus, to obtain a good family, wife children, friends are all wishes that fall in this category. Each of these is important else life can become miserable.
- Lokaha Prapthihi: The environment of interaction between Self and objects should be favorable. It should be peaceful. It means improve present atmosphere or replace existing atmosphere. An atmosphere of violence, anger, hatred etc., is after all not very conducive for happiness.

All above are the Karmas or the three means and their respective three ends. Even if a person is lucky to enjoy all of the above three, such a Satvik person will learn from Life's Lessons. Important lessons learned are that all three goals are wonderful, however, inherent in them are deficiencies or Doshas. While these Doshas are relatively good (Preyaha) they are not absolute good or Sreyaha. Thus, there are three Doshas or Dosha Trayam. They are:

1. Dukhamishritatvam: This includes desire for acquisition, preservation and loss. All three of them can also cause pain.
2. Atripthihi: They will not give us total satisfaction.

You will always crave for more. You will tend to compare and there will always be someone with more than you.

3. Bandhatvam: When we have them and use them, we soon also become dependent on them. One becomes attached or addicted. You become more dependent without your own knowledge.

Most of us do not think of these Doshas. Many of us do not worry about it. A slum person prefers his slum even if a better place is offered to him. He will rent the new place and come back to his slum.

However, some people start exploring some goals that are free from these Doshas. To such intelligent people, Vedas say, there are such goals, but they cannot be obtained from Karma Kanda. Karma Kanda only deals with Preyaha. If you want Sreyaha you have to go somewhere else. Such an intelligent seeker is called a Mumukshu. Others are called Bubhukshu. Karma Kanda cannot serve a Mumukshu. Mumukshu has to go Vedanta for this.

So, what is this defect free goal? That defect free goal is Brahman or Moksha. It is not mired in dukha, atripthi and bandhaha.

Where is this Brahman and how to acquire it? Vedanta says you can never obtain it because that defect free one is in the form of the "Seeker" in you. You are that. I also have a very difficult time swallowing the idea that I am that defect free Brahman. Everything I have, has defects, including my body, mind and intellect. They all have limitations. All my experiences, so far, have proven my limitation. Even my children tell me that I was a terrible parent. In this context I have a big doubt if I am a defect free Self. There is a very big gap between what I think of myself versus what Vedanta thinks of me. I sometimes feel like dropping the Gita, Upanishads and the Guru.

If I am born in a culture where Shraddha in scriptures is important, I will not drop the Upanishad. A boy's Upanayana ceremony lasts four days and on the last day the Brahmachari worships Shradha Devi. To such a person the Shradha comes that the Vedas cannot go wrong. I develop deep faith in the Vedas. So, I need to question my conclusions. I have taken it for granted, "I am finite". I need to re-analyze my conclusion. Therefore, I have to start a Self Enquiry to verify if my conclusion is valid or not. For a long time human beings thought the Sun went around the Earth. Then came a person who said that the Earth went around the Sun or that we are not in a Geo-centric universe. This scientist was harassed and rejected.

When I enter into Self Enquiry, I find, I don't have the instruments for such an enquiry. Just as we have a telescope to study the stars and a microscope to study bacteria, I don't have an instrument to study the Self. Here I am enquiring into the Enquirer. Regular instruments are not useful for such an enquiry. Such regular instruments are also known as Pauresheya Pramanani because they are extrovert in nature and not useful for such an enquiry.

I need a special mirror, one to reveal my real "I". This is known as Shabda Pramanam or a verbal mirror. When somebody tells you, "you look jaundiced" (yellow) it is a Shabda Pramana or a Shabda mirror. When I try to study the Upanishad by myself, I find they use peculiar methods that are different from objective science. Shastra has to use words to reveal my Self.

Other methods will only give us an intellectual and in-direct knowledge. Other methods tend to objectify. Description of the Brahman is not one of an object rather it is one of my own Self. If not, Student will say he has understood but not experienced the Brahman. This knowledge and experience dichotomy (or division) does not occur in Brahmagyanam. The student should not come to a definite conclusion. Therefore, a

Guru alone can make the Upanishad speak to you. What is the method used by the Guru? He uses six factors in the primary teaching also known as Tatparyam. It is “ You are what you want to be in life”. It will teach that you are a secure and immortal being. This teaching has to be provided consistently, again and again until the student nods his head in understanding.

Take Away:

There is a very big gap between what I think of myself versus what Vedanta thinks of me. It is very difficult to believe that I am that defect free Brahman.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 69, Chapter 5

Greetings All,

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda started Chapter 5 today. He said in chapters 2, 3 and 4 respectively, Sri Krishna spoke about two topics. He spoke about Sadhana and Lifestyle. Recapping those teachings Swamiji said:

1. **Sadhana:** Regarding Sadhana he made it clear that everyone has to go through Karma Yoga Sadhana and Gyana yoga sadhana. There is no choice. Karma Yoga is the

means towards Gyana Yoga and Gyana Yoga is the means towards liberation.

Karma yoga is a means and Gyana Yoga too is a means while moksha is the end. You can have a choice between means and a choice between ends but not a choice between a mean and an end. One can choose between pants or shirts. Here, there is choice. Choice is only between similar. Thus, one can't choose between a pant and a shirt. Similarly, one cannot choose between Karma Yoga and Gyana Yoga. Once you choose an end, it means the means is a given.

Citing an example, getting into a bus is meaningful only when you have chosen not only the bus but also the destination. You cannot choose the bus without choosing the destination. We are not getting into the bus for a joy ride. Similarly, if you have chosen a destination, you have to choose the means as well.

Citing another example, suppose I go to a doctor for stomach pain and the doctor prescribes a tablet. I cannot get away from not taking the tablet. If I chose the end of removing the pain, I have to choose the means as well. Therefore, choosing the means and end is complementary; one choice will validate the other choice and the other way around as well. Thus, Karma Yoga is the way to come to Gyana yoga. Gyana yoga is the way to Moksha.

Citing another example, it is just like a person occupies both the father status and son status. With regard to his son, he is the father and with regard to his father, he is the son. From Karma yoga's perspective Gyana Yoga is an end. From Moksha's perspective Gyana Yoga is the means.

After explaining quite a bit by Sri Krishna, Arjuna is still not clear. His confusion is with respect to sadhana. This is an area of confusion to many people.

There are people who think karma yoga and gyana yoga are

alternative means of liberation. Many still think and talk about different paths to liberation. Thus, if you are an active person, you attain moksha through karma and if you are an intellectual person, you attain moksha through Gyana yoga.

Even Shankaracharya struggled to clarify this confusion. He too says karma yoga cannot lead you to liberation, it will take you to Gyana yoga and Gyana yoga will lead to liberation; this is one part of the teaching;

Then there is second part of teaching with regard to the lifestyle. A person can lead two types of lifestyles, one is life of activity in society and the other is life of seclusion or life of work and life of withdrawal.

or Life in society and life in seclusion.

2.Life style:

Sri Krishna described two types of lifestyle. One is a person who is active in society and other is one who leads a life of seclusion.

Active in society is known as Grihasthashrama. While one leading a life of seclusion is known as Sanyasahrama. In olden times, after Gurukula, both lifestyles were open to a person. A lifestyle is also called a Nishta. Sri Krishna points out that every person has a choice in lifestyle. One can be a Grihastha or a monk. Whatever lifestyle or ashrama one adopts in both of them you have to have follow Karma yoga and then follow up with Gyana Yoga.

Grihasthashrama Dharma is Karma Yoga for householders. Sanyasahrama is Karma Yoga for monks. Both have their rites, pujas and rituals prescribed.

Grihastha will have a sacred thread while a Sanyasi has a danda. Grihastha has got rituals, prayers, pujas and parayanams. Sanyasi too has rituals, prayers, pujas and

parayanams. The type of parayanams may vary.

For a grihastha Vishnu Sahasranama and similar mantras are emphasized. For the sanyasi,

Upanishad, Bhashyams, etc. are emphasized.

For a grihastha, saguna ishvara namas are given, like Namashivaya, Narayanaya etc.; for a Sanyasi, Upanishad mahavakya mantras are given for japa, or Omkara japa, and other similar mantras are also given. For both, puja is a requirement. All these are necessary to develop a mental conditioning required for reaching Gyana yoga. A sanyasi should qualify himself to enter Gyana yoga. A grihastha also has to qualify himself to come to Gyana yoga.

Sri Krishna asks all to follow their Svadharma.

Once ready, both should come to Gyana Yoga. Thus, in sadhana, there is no choice. In lifestyle, however, there is choice. Each lifestyle has plusses and minuses. For Gihastashrama the plus points are he is able to perform Pancha Maha Yagna, perform noble services for society, he has security through his children, family and wealth. The minuses are that he has equal responsibilities. He has to raise his children, provide education, marry off his daughters etc. He has to face the fears and anxieties related to raising a family.

In Sanyasa ashrama, however, there is no responsibility, no wife, no husband, no children and you need not bother about anything. If you get hungry, ask Bhavathi Bhiksham Dehi; somebody will give Bhiksha. So, while there is no responsibility there is also no security.

So, every ashrama has got it's plus and minus points. Therefore, Sri Krishna says, take to any ashrama and pursue both the sadhanas and get liberation.

After listening to all this Arjuna wanted further

clarification. He wants to know about the Nishta, when there is a choice. **Decision-making is always difficult. This is so, because we don't want to face the consequences of our decision.**

Arjuna's mind at the moment is voting for Sanyasa. He does not want to kill. In crisis, he wants to escape with Sri Krishna's blessings. His question is which is better, Grihastha or Sanyasa? Sri Krishna is going to talk about Sanyasa Yoga.

Shloka # 1: Arjuna said:

संन्यासं वा कर्म वा वाच्यं भक्त्या वा यदात्मनः ।
तदात्मनो वा कर्म वा वाच्यं भक्त्या वा यदात्मनः ॥5.1॥

The renunciation of works, Krishna, and again, their performance you praise. Tell me for certain which of the two is better.

In spite of Sri Krishna's clear teaching, Arjuna asks: Sri Krishna, you glorify both ashramas. You have glorified life of activity (grihasthashrama). You have also glorified Sanyasa Ashrama, life of seclusion. The two are contradictory. So, Sri Krishna, tell me, which one is better of the two? Both are opposites. I cannot follow both, life of seclusion and life of activity, at the same time.

In fact, the grihastha is supposed to be the pillar of the society. He is the one who nourishes all the other three ashramas because all the three ashramas live on Bhiksha. Thus, a brahmachari has to live on Bhiksha; a vanaprasthi has to live on Bhiksha and a sanyasi also has to live on Bhiksha alone. So, if the three ashramas have to receive Bhiksha, somebody has to give it. So, he is the one who gives Bhiksha.

Some other monastic religions glorify Sanyasa. Ashrama is a place of spiritual sadhana. Ashrama can happen in family life too. Such a person is unaffected even in his family life. Janaka Maharaja is often cited as an example of a Grihastha

Gyani.

Thus, says Swamiji, it is not a choice between Sadhanas rather it is a choice between lifestyles.

Shloka # 2:

Sri Krishna said:

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[illegible]

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Both renunciation and Karma Yoga promote the supreme good; but of the two, Karma Yoga is superior to the renunciation of works.

Sri Krishna says, both ashramas are equally good for both sadhanas. In Vedanta the term Dvanda is used. It means everything in creation has a good and a bad aspect to it.

Both ashramas are equally good for following karma yoga sadhana and Gyana yoga sadhana. Karma yoga can be efficiently followed in grihastha ashrama; but for Gyana yoga the obstacles for Grihastha are many while you require an undistracted life. The many duties of grihasthashrama are all seen as obstacles. Therefore, in grihastha ashrama, karma yoga can be ideally followed;

In sanyasa ashrama, karma yoga cannot be ideally followed because he does not have the resources to do a lot of karmas; there is no money with them; he cannot do any good karma; he has to manage with limited activities, like japa, puja, susrusha, etc. Therefore, there are certain advantages in following some sadhanas and some disadvantages in following other sadhanas. However, in both, you can follow the sadhana and attain liberation; therefore in both ashramas one can follow the sadhana and attain liberation.

Shastra also talks of the ashrama that fits a type of person.

Sanyasa requires a particular mental make up that is not an easy one. Sanyasa ashrama is dangerous for an unprepared person. Sri Krishna, says, for majority of people life of activity is safer and ideal. In Vedas there are rules when one goes from Brahmacharya to Grihastha. From Brahmacharya one can also go to Sanyasashrama with Guru's advice and Shishya's acceptance.

The greatest risk of sanyasashrama is that you can't go back. It is an irreversible process.

So, Sri Krishna says, Grihastha Ashrama is a better choice for majority. He says Gita is for general public, while Upanishad is for evolved one's. While Upanishad prefers Sanyasahrama, Gita considers Grihasthashrama as the best. We should keep in mind that in Gita, both the Teacher and Student were grihastas.

Shloka # 3:

गौतम उवाच ॥ गृहस्थः कथं भवति ॥ गृहस्थः कथं भवति ॥
गृहस्थः कथं भवति ॥ गृहस्थः कथं भवति ॥ गृहस्थः कथं भवति ॥ 5.3 ॥

Know him to be a perpetual renouncer who neither shuns nor seeks, O mighty-armed! One who is above such contraries is really liberated from bondage.

Now that Sri Krishna has recommended Grihasta Ashrama, is there any way one can get advantage of both Ashramas? This is a thought that can come in a person's mind. Sri Krishna, addressing this question, says, there is a method. He says one needs to handle Raga and Dvesha in Grihastashrama. Householder's life is influenced by many factors. It is said nine planets influence a householder. A son-in-law is considered the tenth planet. He is a planet over which you have no control. Whatever he does affects your daughter but you cannot do anything about it.

Thus, there are many relationship that are similar, in which

you have no control. When you get married to a girl and you place a knot on one neck simultaneously you

are putting knots on many other necks as well. You are immediately related to the girl's family. All these knots are factors that can influence you but you cannot control them. Therefore, you have to learn to manage your ragah-dveshah. Whether your likes and dislikes are fulfilled or not, you have to learn to navigate through life without being affected. This requires tremendous strength; And therefore Sri Krishna says a grihastha is a sanyasi, if he has learnt to handle likes and dislikes; For one who has managed his ragah-dveshah the house itself is an ashrama That is the trick. Sri Krishna , however, does not say how we are to manage Raga and dvesha.

Take Away:

Decision-making is always difficult. This is so, because we don't want to face the consequences of our decision.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Saddharshanam, Class 23

Greetings All,

Shloka # 39:

To say there is duality during the inquiry, but non-duality in the knowledge of the Supreme is not right. The tenth man's

tenth-ness is one and same when he is lost before the search and when he is found later.

Continuing his teaching, Swami Paramarthananda said, this is a very important shloka. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi talks about the nature of Advaitam. He says a clear understanding of Advaitam is required for understanding mukti, knowledge and bondage. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi points out that Advaitam is not an event produced in time or in the future. It is not even a particular state such as say a mystical state. It is also not part of an experience we work for. We need to be clear that Advaitam is not an event nor a state nor an experience. All the three are bound by time or they occur in time. Therefore, the Advaitam or Non-duality that one obtains in Samadhi, Sushupthi or Pralaya is a misnomer. It is actually a temporary state of Advaitam. Sushupthi Advaitam is temporary because it occurs only in Sushupthi. It is the same with Samadhi as well where the state is available only in Samadhi. Temporary Advaitam is a false name for Dvaitam or unmanifest Dvaitam. All three states are Dvaitam. Thus, Advaitam in Sushupthi becomes Dvaitam upon waking. So it is for the other two states as well.

True Advaitam is a fact that obtains all the time. Vedanta says a fact has to be understood as an eternally occurring fact. This understanding is called Advaita Gyanam. This knowledge, Advaita Gyanam, is not an experience. Experience is a mental event, which will be displaced by other events. An experience is a displaceable mental event. However, Knowledge is a mental event that cannot be displaced by any future experience. It is permanently there. Thus, the knowledge that $2+2=4$ continues, even if you are feeling happy, sad, hot or cold. It is not displaced. So, knowledge does not go with experience.

So, what we need is Advaita Gyanam not Advaita experience. Knowledge is always associated with fact(s). An experience may or may not be related to a fact. Thus, Sunrise is an

experience. Sunrise, however, is not associated with the fact that earth is going around its own axis. While we experience the flat earth, it is not a fact. Thus, experience can be a fact or a myth.

Here knowledge related to facts is being described. Knowledge of Advaitam, since it is associated with fact, can't be displaced by a future Dvaitam. Therefore, while the Advaita Gyani continues to experience Dvaitam in waking, sleep and dream states it will not disturb his knowledge of Advaitam. This is highlighted in the expression "Aham Brahma Asmi". "I am Brahman" is to be known as a fact. Once known, this knowledge will not be displaced by any other experience including Dvaitam.

At the time of Sadhana there is Dvaitam or bondage. At time of knowledge of Reality there will be Advaitam.

Advaitam and moksha are synonymous. "I will become free later" is the biggest mistake made by a seeker. It is not a future event. Even so, we often ask, when will I get Moksha? Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says such a statement is not correct.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi gave the example of the tenth man referenced in Vedanta. Very briefly, ten boys were crossing a river. One of the ten was their leader. After crossing, to ensure all crossed safely, the leader counted them. He counted only nine. He reportedly missed counting himself. He is the famous tenth boy, who was thought to be missing but never was.

So too in life, we look for peace and security just as looking for the tenth boy (man). The boy was the tenth boy before and after the knowledge. At that particular time and moment this was a fact. By knowledge, he just dropped the notion that the tenth boy was lost. Nothing new was involved. It was just the dropping of a notion. While dropping the notion "the boy was lost" was simple, the emotional consequences of this are enormous. For Ananda, for spiritual awakening etc., we are

looking for the tenth man. Shastra calls the tenth man the Brahman. After getting this man we still continue hunting for Brahman. Here Shastra tells us the tenth man is not an event. It says, “ You are Brahman, You were and You will always be”. Once this knowledge comes in, all future experiences cannot displace this knowledge. “ I am Brahman despite my emotional condition.”

The tenth man was there all the time, but was thought to be lost. Before enquiry, after enquiry and when the tenth man was attained, the tenth man never went anywhere. He was always there.

Therefore moksha is not an event. It is a fact. Advaita is a fact. You only need the knowledge to know it.

This shloka was about discovering the tenth man the Atma.

Shloka # 40:

When man thinks “ I do work”; he becomes bound to enjoy the fruits of action also. If the doer-ship is washed away by inquiry, the results of the three types of actions perish. That alone is liberation.

Almost the same idea presented in previous shloka is discussed here, only this time from perspective of the individual or Jiva.

Moksha is dropping of a notion. When I say Aham, there are two parts to it. One part is Chaitanyam (Atma Amsha) and second part is Ahamkara Amsha consisting of the body-mind-complex with borrowed Chaitanyam. The Ahamkara Amsha is also called Chiddabasha. This mixture of Atma with Ahamkara is the “I”. Atma cannot say “ I” as Atma cannot perform transactions. Ahamkara itself exists due to Atma. Of this inseparable mixture, Atma is Satyam while Ahamkara is Mithya.

Kartrutvam, doership, belongs to the unreal Ahamkara Part.

Doership does not belong to Atma. This mixed “ I” is performing all transactions. The same mixed “ I” attains knowledge as well. In ignorance, I am not aware of my Atma nature. So, I take myself to be Ahamkara. However, when reality is known, unreal becomes real. When waking is not known, dream is real. During ignorance, I am Ahamkara and it is real. For this Ahamkara, doer-ship is real. Therefore, all Karmas with their resulting Karma Phalams are also real. This is what makes astrological charts important.

Once the three Karmas are real, the Bhokta also becomes real, as does Samsara with its Sukha and Dukha. All this happens due to Ahamkara being considered as real. Until this truth is known, Samsara cannot be destroyed.

Therefore, Ahamkara must be made unreal. Dream can be converted to unreal when you wake up to a higher reality. Therefore Original Consciousness (OC) must be claimed as myself. This is Atma Gyanam. Falsification of Ahamkara through Atma Gyanam is moksha. Atma Gyanam is knowledge not an event or experience.

Thus, Vedanta teaches you that you are not a Karta nor the Karma nor the resulting Karma Phalam. This teaching is performed through Guru Shastra Vidya. Here, Ahamkara (or body) is not physically eliminated; rather we are falsifying the body. In spiritual awakening the body does not disappear. It is just a change in my understanding. It is similar to our understanding that the earth is round while our experience is that it is flat. This is called falsification. Doer-ship is falsified. With this falsification, all three Karmas (Sanchita, Prarabhda, Agami) are destroyed. Prarabhda experience continues and is real for the body; however, the Gyani sees it as a Mithya.

Therefore, all are falsified. This falsification of Karmas is Mukti.

This shloka is about falsification of Ahamkara and with it, all the three Karmas.

Shloka # 41:

When there is the sense of bondage, anxiety for liberation is there. By the inquiry “for whom is the bondage?” one’s own Self, the ever free, is itself established. Then where is the thought of bondage and where is the concern for liberation?

The nature of Advaitam must be understood as well as Moksha. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says, really speaking Moksha is not possible. Moksha is defined as removal of bondage. Vedanta says there is nothing called bondage. It is only a notion. When this is the case where is the question of removing it? Therefore accepting moksha means accepting bondage. However, moksha means freedom just as in the Rope and Snake metaphor. There is really no snake to be removed. Reality is known once I understand that there is no snake to be eliminated. In Vedanta there is no Moksha. It is only a figurative expression for “no bondage”. Knowledge of the “absence of bondage” is figuratively called Moksha. Therefore for a Gyani there is neither bondage nor Moksha.

Take Away:

1. Advaitam is not an event nor a state nor an experience. It is knowledge even as $2+2=4$.
2. True Advaitam is a fact that obtains all the time. Just as the knowledge $2+2=4$ is there all the time.
3. Shastra calls the tenth man the Brahman.
4. We need to discover our inner tenth man.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 67

Chapter 4

Greetings All,

Shloka # 36:

Even if, among all sinners, you are the very worst, by this
raft of knowledge you will go beyond sin.1.36

**Even if, among all sinners, you are the very worst, by this
raft of knowledge you will go beyond sin.**

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, from shloka # 36 onwards Sri Krishna is talking about Gyana phalam. In shloka # 36 he talked about the following benefits by obtaining Gyanam: 1) Sarva moha nasha, 2) Sarvatra Jivatma Paramatma Aikyam and 3) Sarva Papa Nasha.

Shloka # 37:

As a kindled fire reduces all fuels to ashes, so, Arjuna !
does the fire of knowledge reduce all works to ashes.4.37

**As a kindled fire reduces all fuels to ashes, so, Arjuna !
does the fire of knowledge reduce all works to ashes.**

4. Sarva Karma Nasha:

Now in this shloka Sri Krishna talks about a fourth benefit of Gyanam called Sarva Karma Nasha. All three karmas, Sanchita, Prarabhda and Agami Karmas are all destroyed with knowledge. Just as a glove insulates one from an electric shock so also Gyanam insulates one from the effects of Karma. While our karmic events don't change, our response to them now changes.

The karma cannot affect a Gyani anymore. He is insulated from its effects. It is as though stopped.

Sri Krishna also compares knowledge to a huge conflagration. Everything is burnt in the fire of Gyana including karmas.

The fire for such a conflagration, however, has to be well kindled. A weak fire can be extinguished by a large piece of wood thrown into the fire. Half knowledge, compared here to a weak fire, will not help. Knowledge needs to be obtained from a Parampara Acharya. Sravanam, mananam and nidhidhyasanam are all required. Knowledge obtained in this manner, from a qualified teacher, will reduce everything to ashes.

What is the difference between Papa Nasha and Karma Nasha? Shloka # 36 talked about Papa Nasha while Shloka # 37 is talking about Karma Nasha.

Papa nasha only refers to papa karmas. Here Karmas mean both papa and punya karmas. Both fall under Samsara. Punya leads to Svarga. But eventually one has to return from Svargam as well. Swamiji compares it to going to America and coming back to Chennai with its heat, humidity and mosquitoes. Thus, Punya is a sorrow that comes later and is a Bandha (attachment). So, Gyani goes beyond both papam and punyam.

Shloka # 38:

॥ ननु ज्ञानं ज्ञानं ज्ञानं ज्ञानं ज्ञानं ॥
ज्ञानं ज्ञानं ज्ञानं ज्ञानं ज्ञानं ॥4.38॥

Nothing exists here as purifying as knowledge. Perfected in yoga, in course of time, one wins it in one's own Self.

With Shloka # 37 Gyana Phalam is over. Four Gyana phalams were explained. They were:

- 1) Sarva moha nasha,
- 2) Sarvatra Jivatma Paramatma Aikyam,

3) Sarva Papa Nasha and

4) Sarva Karma Nasha.

Now Sri Krihna wants to conclude with some dos and don'ts or Sadhanas.

He says there is no greater purifier than knowledge. There are many purifiers such as Ganga Jalam, Rudra mantra japam, etc. All purifiers can destroy papams. However, only Knowledge can destroy Avidya. No other purifier can destroy Avidya or Agyanam.

Who can get this knowledge? Only qualified and prepared persons can get this knowledge. Such a person is known as **Samsidhaha**. The method of preparation is known as Yogaha. Yogaha are two fold. They are Karma Yoga and Ashtanga Yoga. Following these two yogas also means leading a religious life. Vedas have decided upon a life style for spiritual growth. Vedic culture is meant for spiritual growth. It, however, does not ignore material growth. If we follow this Vedic life we will reach this knowledge. This is called Yogaha. It is a growth of spiritual, emotional and intellectual attributes. Put in another way it is Tatva Bodha's Sadhana Chatushtaya Sampathihi. This knowledge can only occur in a pure mind. When asked how long it will take, Sri Krishna does not comment. Rather, he says, enjoy the journey.

Shloka # 39:

विदुषोऽपि विदुषोऽपि विदुषोऽपि विदुषोऽपि विदुषोऽपि
विदुषोऽपि विदुषोऽपि विदुषोऽपि विदुषोऽपि विदुषोऽपि 4.39

The man of faith, who has mastered his senses and who is intent on it, wins knowledge. Winning knowledge, he attains without delay the peace supreme.

In the previous shloka Yoga was mentioned as a Sadhana or a way of religious life and a qualified person was called a

Samsiddhaha. In this shloka more sadhanas are prescribed.

Shradha is now prescribed. It is faith in the validity of scriptures until one gets knowledge. As you study the Gita you will notice that all your doubts are answered at some point during the study. Every Acharya also accepts questions.

Siddhi Grantha is a text that raises a lot of questions and clarifies doubts. This attitude of faith is called Sradha. Such a person is called Sradhavan. Such a person gets knowledge. It should be noted that Vedanta also accepts questions from current situations as well.

Another sadhana mentioned is **Tatparam** or sincere commitment to the Teacher. Explaining this, Swamiji said in the early stages of his Gita lectures he had Q & A sessions at the end of the class. However, he found, most people did not come prepared. They would ask questions that were not relevant to the teaching in the class. One should revisit the teaching and this is known as manaha. Only from this process can legitimate doubts arise. This is showing commitment to the teacher.

The next sadhana discussed by Sri Krishna is Sense control and focusing capacity or **Samyatindriyaha**. So, all above-mentioned sadhanas are required. They are:

- Samsidhaha, a qualified person.
- Sradha, faith in validity of scriptures.
- Tatparam, sincere commitment to the teacher.
- Samyatindriyaha, control of senses and a capacity for focus.

All four are required for Gyanam. Such a person gets peace that surpasses all understanding. Sri Krishna promises this benefit in this very life.

He also says with Gyanam we also need to address or overcome some of our deeply entrenched Vasanas as well. This may take some time.

Our actions and responses are governed by two factors, one is our knowledge; and another is our vasana; knowledge will take care of part of the problem, but we have to handle our vasanas, or habits as well.

Habit changing requires deliberate effort. It is not that easy to change well entrenched habits like emotional problems, inferiority complex, lack of self-image jealousy, anger, irritation etc. They are all well entrenched and one needs to handle one of them at a time. Only by controlling our Vasanas can we attain true knowledge.

Shloka # 40:

अज्ञाना अश्रद्धा संशयः परित्यजेत्
निराश्रितो न भवति न हि लोके न हि परे ॥4.40॥

The ignorant, the unfaithful, the doubting self perishes. Neither this world nor the next nor happiness accrues to the doubter.

In the previous shloka Sri Krishna talked about positive traits. Here, now, he talks about negative traits. He describes them as follows:

1. Ignorance: with respect to the world. He says every human being has to be informed about the world to lead a normal life. Worldly knowledge is required.
2. Ashradha: Lack of faith in scriptures.
3. Samshayaha: Doubt.

Of the three Samshayaha or the doubting Thomas is the most problematic. Suppose a person is not worldly he may not get worldly ananada, however, due to his shraddha he will obtain Parloka Sukham. One who does not believe in scriptures but believes in worldly pleasures, he may not get Paraloka sukham but he will get Iha Loka sukham. However, a Samshaya Atma even with worldly knowledge will not obtain Iha loka Sukham nor Para Loka Sukham.

So Samshaya is the worst enemy. Trust in family member, co-workers, even own driver etc., is required. Trust involves risk. Trust is very important in life. It is required for Vedanta as well.

Shloka # 41:

योगाया योग-समन्यस्ता-कार्मानाम् ।
युक्तो योगी योग-समन्यस्ता-कार्मानाम् ॥4.41॥

Arjuna! works bind not him who is vigilant, who through yoga, has renounced works and who has slain doubts with knowledge.

Here Sri Krishna is summing up the sadhanas and the phalams. A person has to go through three stages of sadhana:

3. **First Stage:** Yogaha or yoga-samnyasta-karmanam. This means Gyanam and what is the Gyanam? Remembering at all times that I am the Atma, which is an Akarta. A person gets detached from all actions. Since actions belong to the body-mind-complex, he allows the body-mind-complex to function in the world; but he does not have attachment or identification and therefore he has renounced the karma identification.
4. **Second Stage:** This stage called Gyana-sanchina-samshayam is where he negates all his doubts by gaining conviction through mananam. Gyanam means conviction; I should be convinced of this knowledge and I should study until I am convinced.
5. **Third stage:** is Atmavantam. This is thenidhidhy asanam stage. In this stage, a person is alert and remembers the teaching at all times. Through the teaching, Gyanam must be available in my day-to-day life. So, Atmavan is one who leads an alert life and one who keeps himself in this state of knowledge during all transactions. Due to his alertness, Karma cannot bind the one who has done the shravana, manana and nidhidhyasanam.

Shloka # 42:

सर्वद्वन्द्वेष्वपि सर्वद्वन्द्वेष्वपि सर्वद्वन्द्वेष्वपि सर्वद्वन्द्वेष्वपि
सर्वद्वन्द्वेष्वपि सर्वद्वन्द्वेष्वपि सर्वद्वन्द्वेष्वपि सर्वद्वन्द्वेष्वपि 4.42

Therefore, 0 Bharata Prince! With the sword of knowledge slay the doubt in the heart born of nescience; resort to Yoga and stand up.

Here Sri Krishna advises Arjuna that he should get rid of all his doubts. For purification of mind, follow Karma yoga, then for enlightenment follow Gyana Yoga. By the sword of understanding all doubts about Karma Yoga and Gyana Yoga will be destroyed. In any event, all doubts are products of ignorance. With knowledge, destroy ignorance. This you alone can do. Guru cannot do it for you. I can only support you.

You are not yet fit for sanyasa yet. Therefore, be a grihastha. Do your duty, even though it is a bitter and unpleasant one, of killing your own kith and kin. You cannot avoid it. Therefore, 0 Arjuna, get up, take your bow, arrow and do your duty.

With this Krishna completes this present discourse.

Take Away:

As per shloka # 41, try to reach a state of alertness of mind at all times. Most of the time our mind is not alert. This alert mind is also a detached mind.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta Class 66, Chapter 4

Greetings All,

Shloka # 34:

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Know it by means of obeisance, exhaustive questionings, service to the (teacher). Knowers who have realized the truth impart to you that knowledge.

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, in shlokas 26 to 33, Sri Krishna talked about the glory of knowledge. Now in shloka # 34 he wants to complete the topic with a description of how to acquire this knowledge. He says our normal instruments of perceptions are all extrovert and meant to reveal the exterior world. Knowledge of Self is not possible with these extroverted instruments.

Citing an example, he says one cannot see one's own eyes. To see one's own eyes one needs a mirror. So also to see one's Atma a special mirror is required. A regular mirror can only reflect the Sthula-Sharira or the gross body. It cannot reflect the Atma. For the Atma one needs the Shastra-darpanam. We also need to know how to use this darpanam. This darpanam must also be clean and free of dust or the image reflected will be dull.

This requires another assistant called the Guru. He teaches us how to use the mirror. He allays all our misunderstandings and helps remove dust like obstacles and clears the mirror.

One requires a Guru. Obtaining knowledge without Guru is an exception. There are many types of Gurus. One type is the one

who initiates by giving mantras. Another guru offers inspiration. All Gurus are useful and required. However, the Guru Sri Krishna talks about is the Gyana Guru. Sri Krishna did not give mantra Upadesha to Arjuna. He functioned as a teaching Guru. He systematically taught Vedanta. He did not say he was God. He did not ask for blind acceptance. He wanted Arjuna to listen to his teaching. Learning involves active listening. Teacher reconciles every statement. Chapter after chapter Arjuna asks questions. He does not accept Sri Krishna's teaching in blind faith. He challenges the contradictions in the teaching.

Citing example of the equation $E=mc^2$, Swamiji says, it is not meant for japa. Each item in it namely the E, the M, and the C all have to be understood in detail. This requires many years of learning. So also it is with Vedanta's equation "You are the ultimate reality". This is not a mantra Japam. One has to know it. Until you are convinced, the teaching is not complete. That is the reason that Sri Krishna went through each chapter until the end of chapter 18. Then Arjuna said, Oh Sri Krishna, my confusion is gone; I have now clearly understood your teaching. This is the Guru referred to here by Sri Krishna.

Describing such a Guru further, Sri Krishna says, such a Gyani, man of knowledge, must also have very good communication skills. In a shloka by poet Kalidasa from his treatise "Malvikgnamitra", the poet emphasizes that simply being a scholar is not sufficient. Imparting the knowledge to other seekers is more important and a scholar who does this is the scholar of highest order. Such a person is also called Stotriya Brahma Nishta Guru or a Gyani or a Tatva Darshi. Just as a doctor who smokes does not have moral authority to advise a smoker, a Guru must have the moral authority. A Tatva Darshi has the true knowledge and as such he can give knowledge. The method of communication used by such Guru's followed Sampradaya. Therefore, a Sampradaya Guru alone is considered

fit to give knowledge. Asampradaya Guru is not accepted as a teaching Guru.

The Shishya also has to be deserving of knowledge. Milk in the wrong vessel will split. The shishya has to be a patram. The Patram's requirements are:

1. Intense desire for knowledge or Jignasa.
2. Humility or accepting one's ignorance. It is also called Vinayaha.

An egocentric person cannot get knowledge. The shishya should express his humility by prostrating before the Guru. He should ask questions. He should perform service or Seva to the Guru. This service will remove his impurities.

Swamiji says it was common for a new shishya to spend some time performing only seva to the Guru. This gave both of them an opportunity to know each other, get acclimatized and build rapport. This was a requirement before starting the teaching. This was also a time of service. During this period both Guru and Shishya are judging each other. This period could even last up to a year. Dayananda Saraswathi in his ashram would ask students to submit their notes. He wanted to see if they understood his teaching or not. It is in this manner a shishya became a patram.

Shloka # 35:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ 1.35

By grasping that knowledge, O Pandava prince! You will no longer be deluded as you are now; and through that, you will behold all beings in the Self and then in Me.

With Shloka # 34 the glorification and how to get Gyanam is over. Shlokas # 35- # 37 deal with Gyana phalam. Sri Krishna presents Gyana phalam as follows:

2. **Moha Nasha:** Arjuna surrendered to Sri Krishna due to his internal conflict in the battlefield. Arjuna was trained in Dharma Shastras. He was a man of knowledge. Yet, he is not able to resolve his internal conflict. He becomes indecisive. This conflict is caused by his attachment. He does not want to face the consequences of his action. He was not ready to accept the death of Bhishma and Drona. He also does not want to stay in the forest. This is Arjuna's dilemma. Our inability to face future because of our emotional attachments is the cause of conflict. Because of this we postpone our decisions. (Go to America or not? Marry or not? Etc.) . Some people go to an astrologer. Unfortunately two astrologers can never agree. This makes the decision even more difficult. The reality is that a decision has to be made. So, internal conflict is a big weakness. With Self-knowledge, I am ready to face any future. I know the outcome can go either way. Still I jump into it anyway. I am ready to face the consequences. Self - knowledge gives one the strength to face consequences. You will not get into internal conflicts anymore. Arjuna, decision-making is always difficult. Self Knowledge helps you and keeps you sane.
3. **Jivatma Paramatma Aikyam:** You will have Jivatma paramatma Aikya darshanam. How? Sri Krishna says, after this knowledge you will know the entire creation rests in God. He is like space, all- pervading. You will also know that the whole world is in "You". Therefore "You" are God. Just like the wave, it was told; you and the ocean are one and the same. Both are essentially water. Therefore, Water is the essence.

Ishwara is Chaitanya. You are Chaitanya. Everything is Chaitanyam.

Shloka # 36:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीकृष्णाय नमः ॥

Even if, among all sinners, you are the very worst, by this raft of knowledge you will go beyond sin.

Two Gyana phalams were mentioned in last shloka. Here Sri Krishna communicates the third benefit.

3. **Sarva Papa Nashaha:** Self-knowledge destroys all your papams. Nothing else destroys papams. Destroying papams acquired through many janmas is very difficult through prayaschittams. Not only are there too many old Papams, we are also constantly acquiring new ones. Citing an example, Swamiji says, Shashtra's say by leaving a young wife a man gets papam for seven Janmas. Self-knowledge, however, destroys all past papams as well as future ones.

Even the worst sinner will cross over the ocean of papam. The Gyanam boat will help you cross over the ocean-of-sins.

Take Away: Our emotional attachments are the cause of internal conflicts. This makes us unable to face the future. This was also Arjuna's dilemma.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Chapter 4, Class 65

Greetings All,

Shloka # 30:

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Yet others, with strictly regulated diet, sacrifice vital breaths in vital breaths. All those are conversant with sacrifice, having destroyed their sins by acts of sacrifice.

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, Sri Krishna has talked about 12 disciplines (mental discipline, pranayama etc.,) including Gyanam as a Sadhana. First of all, these can be considered spiritual sadhanas only if God is involved in the process. Without God they are just exercises. Spiritual growth is only possible with Ishwara; hence the word Yagnaha is used. The second condition is that all are spiritual sadhana's only if their goal is spiritual and not material. These exercises often can also help us with material gains. The word Yagnaha is used only if the practice is for spiritual purposes. Thus, the two factors, motive and god, have to be present to make them a spiritual sadhana.

Shloka # 30 discussed the discipline related to food as a Yagnaha. Upvasa (Upa-Vasa) means staying near God. To do so one has to avoid sensory objects on the day of Upavasa. The word Ahara does not only mean food, it also includes other sensory objects that we come in contact with such as hearing, speaking etc., or the Pancha Indriya's. In Chapter 6 Sri Krishna discusses quantity control of food while in chapter 17 he discusses its quality control. Both need to be controlled.

So, discipline with respect to Ahara means Pancha Prana are to

be disciplined. This is also a Yagnaha. Undisciplined Pancha Prana is the sacrifice for disciplined Pancha Parana.

With this shloka, all 12 Yagnahas are complete. Sri Krishna does not say that all 12 sadhanas have to be practiced. He recommends some or some combination at least be practiced.

Citing the sacred thread ceremony or Yagno pavitham is one such Yagnaha. Man is born Animal-man. He then becomes a Man-man through his spiritual life. Later with knowledge he becomes God –Man. The twice born is a deliberate person. By practice of Yagnahas one destroys impurities obstructing knowledge. Hence all Yagnahas are glorious.

Shloka # 31:

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They partake of the ambrosial remains of these sacrifices and repair to the eternal Brahman. The non-performer of sacrifices does not own (even) this world; why then, O best of Kuru princes! Speak of another?

Sri Krishna says if a person practices one or more of these Sadhanas it will be helpful. Food should be taken only after the sadhana.

Thus, Shastra says one must get up before sunrise. We must welcome the Sun God when he comes up. Before that one must take a bath and perform prayer. The daily bath itself is a ritual. It has two purposes. One is to purify the physical impurities and second to cleanse all inner impurities as well. All these have to be washed. Every transaction of ours brings with it impurities such as anger, stress etc. Thus, we have the Snana mantra called Aghamarshana mantram. It is addressed to Lord Varuna, the God of water. One should at least say a prayer(s) before taking a bath. Only after the bath and a prayer should one break one's fast. Many of us do not know

what is hunger; because we have never given a chance to our body to tell us what is hunger; so therefore, we are supposed to break the fast, religiously after the yagnaha and the food I take is called yagnaha shishtam. My breakfast is called Yagna Shishtam; while, lunch is called Yagna Prasadam. The Yagnaha prasadam is also called Amrithum. Swamiji recommends trying this kind of disciplined life and see how it changes us. He says you will feel that the mind seems to be light.

These are the 12 Yagnahas. All eleven of them lead to the twelfth, Gyana Yagnaha. A religious life awakens the desire for philosophical knowledge. Such a person attains Brahman. He is known as a Yogi.

Sri Krishna cautions the people who do not practice some sadhana in their lives. Scriptures do not ask us to follow these disciplines for their benefit; rather they recommend them for our own wellbeing. For an undisciplined person even the worldly happiness will disappear. Due to his undisciplined life, his body and mind wear out making him incapable of enjoying even worldly pleasures. Sri Krishna asks how can such a person enjoy spiritual joy?

Shloka # 32:

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Thus have many sacrifices been spread out in the pages of the Veda. Know them all to be born of works. Knowing thus will you be liberated.

Here Sri Krishna says the 12 yagnahas he has described are only a sample of the many yagnahas prescribed in the Vedas. In Bhashyam, Shankaracharya describes many yagnahas and also provides reference to their source Veda. Other yagnahas include Pilgrimage, Japa etc. The word BrahmaMukham in this shloka means in Vedas. The reason there are so many Yagnahas is because there are many types of human personalities. Thus,

there are Yagnahas related to physical, Vachika (oral) and manasika (mental) attributes. So, the many sadhanas have been created to suit different types of people. In general, yagnahas can be classified in two groups.

First one is Gyana Yagnaha.

Second group are Non-Gyana Yagnahas. These include Dravya Yagna or Karma Yagna. They also include sadhanas such as meditation.

What is the role of each one in life? Karma Yagnahas can only purify the mind. Thus, Japa, Ashtanga Yoga etc can only purify the mind. Only one or a combination of such Sadhanas need to be followed for Chitta Shiddhi.

After purifying the mind one has to come to Gyana Yagnaha. The multiple choices are available only for Karma Yagnahas and not for Gyana Yagnaha. Gyana Yagnaha is a singular sadhana that has to be followed to attain liberation.

Even Ashtanga Yoga's Nirvikalpa Samadhi cannot give us Gyanam.

Shloka # 33:

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The sacrifice of knowledge, O scourge of foes! Is superior to the sacrifices of materials. All works, without exception, Arjuna! culminate in knowledge.

Here Sri Krishna talks about the glory of Gyana Yagna. He says Dravya Yagna (Karma Yoga) is of lesser superiority than Gyana Yagna. Why so? Since all Karma Yagnas culminate or fructify only in Knowledge, they are useless if they do not take us to Gyanam. Karma Yagnam is incomplete without Gyana Yagnam. Vedas, however, do not prescribe a time line to reach Gyana Yagnam.

Karma Yagna is an indirect means while Gyana Yagna is the direct means of liberation. Gyana Yagna is also not possible without Karma Yagna. There is no short cut.

Another meaning of the shloka is that all Karma phalams are included in Gyana Phalam. Karma phalam is finite in nature as it is a result in time. Gyanam leads to knowledge of “Aham Brahma Asmi”. It is knowledge of the infinite. Infinite cannot become finite. Finite, however, can be a part of infinite.

In chapter # 2 Sri Krishna gave an example of this. He asks who will ask for limited water from a pond when a huge lake is nearby.

Shloka # 34:

$\frac{1}{10} + \frac{1}{10} = \frac{2}{10}$

Know it by means of obeisance, exhaustive questionings, service to the (teacher). Knowers who have realized the truth impart to you that knowledge.

Here Sri Krishna says Gyana Yagna cannot be practiced independently. It needs external guidance. It needs:

- Shatram: that deals with the Self. My eyes can see the whole world but cannot see themselves. So we need a mirror. We need a special mirror, a verbal mirror, or a shastra-darpanam. I cannot operate it by myself. One can see one's Self only when this mirror is operated properly. For this a Guru is required.
- Guru

Best Practices: Practice of some sadhana every day is highly recommended for a seeker.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Saddarshanam, Class 21

Greetings All,

Shloka # 35:

“I am not myself” or “I know myself”... such expressions of man are a laughable matter. Is the Self two-fold, by the division of the Seer and the seen? In the knowledge of the oneness of one’s Self, indeed, there are no divisions.”

Continuing his teaching, Swami Paramarthananda said,

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi has been talking about Atma Gyanam as a means of falsifying Ahamkara. Here he points out the many misconceptions about Atma Gyanam. He says this aspect needs to be clarified. Atma Gyanam is not an event where the unknown Atma becomes known. There is no question of knowing an unknown Atma. If so, it will mean objectifying Atma. An event in time means objectification. Before it was unknown and later became known. This is not possible with respect to Atma. Atma happens to be of the nature of consciousness. Consciousness is not objectifiable. Who will objectify it? Matter cannot objectify it. Matter is inert. Can a second consciousness objectify the first one? This is also not possible as there is only one consciousness. One part of Consciousness also cannot objectify another part of it because Consciousness does not have parts.

Therefore, matter, second consciousness or part of consciousness, none of them can objectify Consciousness. Therefore objectifying or knowing it as an event is not

possible.

Experiencing also cannot be done. Knowing, experiencing etc., are all misconceptions. Such an event is not possible. Our Consolation is that one need not objectify it. Knowing is required only if there is ignorance regarding something. Nobody is ignorant of the Consciousness. Unlike an inert object, everyone knows “ I am a conscious being”. Therefore, where is the question of knowing it? It is not required. Atma Gyanam is not a conventional process of knowing. So, people who say they know or don't know are all joking.

Expanding on the shloka Swamji said, the expressions “ I don't know myself or I know myself” both are laughable statements, as they don't exist. They both objectify knowledge. Both knowledge and ignorance are not possible with respect to Self. Subject and Object cannot be the same. The eyes see but they cannot be the objects of seeing. Does Atma exist as the subject and Object? If it exists, as subject it cant be an object and if it exists as an object it cannot be the subject. It does not exist in a two fold manner. Atma gyanam is thus a logical contradiction. It cannot happen in time. Since Atma is only one, there is no subject object division possible. No Gyani can claim, “ I know Atma”. If this is the case then what is Self Knowledge? Who is an Atma Gyani? What is it?

First: There is no “knowing” of Atma. There is also no “ignorance of Atma” as well. I am a “conscious” being. Nobody needs to be taught this.

Then, what is the aim of Self Knowledge?

We have some notions regarding Atma. These notions are the objects of our knowledge. Atma itself is not the object of our knowledge.

Citing an example: I am a mortal; this is a concept of me. I am located here; this is yet another concept of the me. I am

so and so many years old; yet another concept of me. Scriptures deal with these conclusions of "me". Vedanta asks us to question these conclusions. It questions these notions of our mind. Vedanta is not a study of Atma rather it is a study of attributes we have given to Atma. Atma Gyanam is about attributes I have attached to Atma. I concentrate on those attributes such as happy, angry, jealous, old, young etc. We are focusing on mortality, happiness and other such attributes rather than Atma.

After studying I conclude these attributes do not belong to me. All emotional problems that I attach to myself do not belong to me. All attributes are Mithya. They do not belong to me. Since they are Mithya, they cannot affect me at any time. Attributes do not belong to me. They don't taint me. Thus, Atma Gyanam is the knowledge about attributes that I attach to myself. Why call it Atma Gyanam and not Attribute Gyanam?

This is so because attributes were once attached to Atma and now have been taken away, hence it is called Atma Gyanam. It is a figurative statement. The reality is that we are studying attributes to see if they belong to me or not. Shankaracharya says Atma Gyanam is negating all attributes. I know myself very well. Vedanta helps remove all our attributes.

Shloka # 36:

Not having gained abidance in one's true nature, in the self-evident abode of Truth by reaching one's heart, loud talks mainly as to whether the Self is real or unreal, with form or without form, many or one, is all the play of Maya.

The approach of Vedanta is to eliminate attributes from the Self evident "I". If a person does not do this, then Vedanta study becomes just an academic exercise. Vedanta says all struggles in life change our attributes. Thus, the struggle to earn money is to change attribute from poor "I" to rich "I". Similarly when one gets married it converts the bachelor "I" to a married "I". It the same with children to become the

father "I". One who understands Vedanta will not try to change attributes. He will stop adding attributes. Otherwise Vedantic study becomes another part of Samsara. Even the struggle to change attributes is part of Samasara. So, do not convert Vedantic study to another form of attribute or Samsara.

One has to turn attention to mind(Hrut), which is the locus of the Sat or Consciousness principle. **Consciousness is present in mind as presence or absence of thought.** I am conscious of both states. Blankness means, consciousness is aware of blankness. Consciousness is witness of this state. So, how do I turn to consciousness? Entertaining the thought that consciousness is Myself and turning attention to it. Witness consciousness is not an object but Myself. "I" am aware of presence or absence of thoughts. It is the entertainment of appropriate thoughts that all attributes:

- do not belong to me.
- do not taint me.
- are Mithya.

And I am that (the Self without attributes).

This thought is called Atma nishta.

Entertainment of this thought is called abidance. Abidance is a mental action. Entertaining appropriate thoughts one should come to this abidance.

Upalabhya in the shloka means abidance in one's real nature that is naturally evident. Vedanta tells us attributes are not me. It means it is to know that "I am" without attributes. This is known as abidance.

Anupalabhya means without getting this abidance. Scholarly discussions are a waste of time. Pravadaha means prattling. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi criticizes academic exchanges. He calls it the success of Maya. Maya can convert Vedanta into a Vedanta trip. It will discuss Sat, Asat, Saguna and Nirguna,

plurality and duality, Dvaita and Advaita etc. If these discussions do not lead to Nishta they are useless. Ask yourself, "Am I studying Vedanta to change myself? Have I changed my understanding of my self?" The same ideas were also discussed in shloka # 34.

Shloka # 37:

The knowledge of the established Truth itself is an accomplishment. Other accomplishments are indeed comparable to a dream. How can a dream be true to one who has woken up? One who abides in Truth does not enter Maya again.

Here Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi removes another big misconception about Self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is associated with mysticism and wise people are known as mystics. Truth is that Self-knowledge is an understanding that takes place in the intellect through Guru Shatra Upadesham. Once you make "knowledge" to be a mystic, then people they think one has extraordinary Siddhi. These Siddhi belongs to the world of Anatma. We don't question the extraordinary powers. However, they don't have any connection to Atma Gyanam. Thus, we can see following kinds of people: No knowledge, no power; No knowledge with power; with knowledge and no power; with knowledge and with power. Knowledge means liberation with or without powers. Powers are Mithya.

Best Practices: Atma Gyanam is not study of Atma. Rather, Atma Gyanam is the knowledge about attributes that I attach to myself. Shankaracharya says Atma Gyanam is negating all attributes.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Saddarshanam, Class 20

Greetings All,

Shloka # 32:

Having reached within the heart, by the search, the “I” notion whose head is broken, falls. Then, another “ I” which is the main one shines forth. It is not ego, but it is Supreme fullness alone.

Continuing his teaching, Swami Paramarthananda said, here Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi presents the result of Self Enquiry or Atma Vichara in a poetic language. Here displacement of Ahamkara by the higher “I” is discussed. After Self Enquiry, now, Atma has become the master. The higher “I” replaces the lower “I”. So, how does this feel displacement in practical terms? Does one see a new & shining Atma? What does one feel in practice? Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says the change is only in our understanding. Detachment of Ahamkara occurs only due to a change in our understanding. Originally, I thought, I was a mortal Jivatma and all transactions reflected this misunderstanding. **However, I am now the immortal Atma. This radically changes all my transactions as the motive behind them has changed.**

The second change is that removal of Ahmakara does not mean Ahamkara is totally destroyed or banished. It just means Ahamkara’s position has been scaled down. Master Ahamkara has been demoted to being just an instrument of transaction. The Swamy now is the higher “I”, Ahamkara has become only a means or medium for transaction. For a Gyani, a Jivan Mukta, the Ahamkara is only an incidental mithya medium. In a Videha Mukta, Ahamkara is completely dissolved.

For the Gyani, Mithya Ahamkara is required for all transactions. It is actually a “requirement” for performing transactions. Thus, even to say, “Aham Brahma Asmi” requires Ahamkara.

However, to be in Brahman, I do not require Ahamkara. Therefore, to say and teach Aham Brahma Asmi, I still need Mithya Ahamakara, knowing it is incidental.

Thus, Gyani uses Ahamkara. Ahamkara is not removed completely. It is a demoted version of the original. Gyani knows “I am the Atma behind it”.

Shloka # 33:

What is there that remains to be done for him who shines, having devoured ego? He knows nothing other than Self. Who is capable of conceiving his state of being?

Once this displacement takes place, the Gyani enjoys poornatvam. Gyani does not struggle any more to accomplish things in life. His mission in life is accomplished. Rest of his life is available to Lord to use him in anyway he wants. He is like a flute for Sri Krishna. The flute is empty inside with nine holes. A human being is also like a flute that once emptied of ego, God can play him and great music comes out. The same body flute when played by the ego emits Apasruti. Such a Gyani stands out in society. His face is without tension. This Gyani need not perform Dharma, Artha and Kama as they are all part of moksha. The infinite includes all finites. He is no more a karta or bhokta. He does not have any worldly duties to fulfill. In Indian society duty is a big burden on an individual. Vedanta says you can never complete your duties so long as you are a karta. If Gyani has duties, they are now transferred to mithya Ahamkara. It becomes part of a drama. He does not have sleepless nights for not fulfilling his duties. While he still performs, he does so in a relaxed manner. **This is the description of a Jivan Mukta.**

He does not perceive anything other than Atma. Everything he sees is Atma. What about Anatma? They are seen as non-substantial Nama and Roopas imposed over the Atma.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says I am struggling to describe a Gyani. To describe the state of mind of a Gyani is very difficult. Only way is to become one. So, become one says the Bhagawan.

Shloka # 34:

The Veda has said clearly, "That thou art". Even then, not having obtained abidance in the Supreme Self, to inquire again indicates the debility of the mind. That Reality indeed shines always as one's Self.

This is an important shloka. Here Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi gives an important clue to his thinking. He accepts Vedanta Vichara as Atma Vichara. Many believe Self Enquiry does not require Vedanta. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi clarifies here how to use Vedanta Vichara. It is an important means. Any means is a blessing if handled properly. If not, then there are two problems:

- The method may not give expected result.
- It can create a negative result.

Vedanta Vichara is a sacred instrument if used properly. If not, its results can't be good. **What is Vedanta Vichara? It is meant for securing emotional independence from everything secular and sacred.** Even dependence on God is dependence. Dependence by its very nature indicates Samsara. Vedanta also should not be an object of dependence. It should give independence from everything including Vedanta. I should use it to enlighten myself. If I forget this, then it becomes a means of enjoyment and entertainment. Vedanta is a means of revealing myself as a source of Joy. It itself is not a source of joy. If used as a source of joy, we become attached to Vedanta. It then becomes a source of dependence, causing

anger, anxiety and stress.

Vedas say “ You are the Brahman” the source of Joy and peace. Even a Guru does not want his Shishya to be dependent upon him. If one loses purpose of Vedanta Vichara then Vedanta Vichara becomes an addiction. Therefore, performing continuous enquiry mechanically, losing sight of original purpose, is an addiction and is due to immaturity of mind.

If you remember the goal and continue enquiry it is purposeful. It will give us final independence. Any addiction makes mind weaker including on Vedanta Vichara.

That Paramatma is always accessible as your own nature for peace and joy. It is your own nature. Vedanta just tells you “You” are the source of the joy.

Shloka # 35:

“I am not myself” or “I know myself”... such expressions of man are a laughable matter. Is the Self two-fold, by the division of the Seer and the seen? In the knowledge of the oneness of one’s Self, indeed, there are no divisions.”

Here, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi, talks of uniqueness of Atma Gyanam. It is distinct from all other knowledge. It also occurs in the intellect alone. Hence purification of mind is required. Body is not the locus of knowledge nor is Atma. Intellect alone is the locus of this knowledge. All knowledge requires an appropriate means to obtain it. In this, Self-knowledge is similar to other forms of knowledge. **The uniqueness of Self Knowledge lies in the fact that in this knowledge the Subject and the Object are one and the same.** I, the Self and I, the Object, are the knowledge. Logically, in any process, including the process of knowledge, subject and object can never be the same. It is a universal law that subject can never be the object. Citing examples of this, thus, the eyes can see everything but themselves; one can taste everything with the tongue but it cannot taste itself

etc. Then, how does this Self-knowledge occur?

Best Practices: Since we are all practicing Vedanta Vichara we should keep following concepts always in mind:

1. **What is Vedanta Vichara? It is meant for securing emotional independence from everything secular and sacred.**
2. **The uniqueness of Self Knowledge (Vedanta Vichara) lies in the fact that in this knowledge the Subject and the Object are one and the same.**
3. **This (Self Knowledge) radically changes all my transactions as the motive behind them has changed.**

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Foot Note: The **Jivanmukta** (one who is in Jivanmukti) has gained liberation while in the body, but in this case, the individual regains full awareness of the world, simultaneously with awareness of the “The god is within me and everyone, everything” state. According to Advaita, a liberated human being (jivanmukta) has realised Brahman as his or her own true self.

Videha mukti (Sanskrit, “liberation after death”) refers to the moksha, or “liberation attained by a person after death”. It is a concept found in Hinduism and Jainism in relation to ending the samsara (the cycle of rebirth), and the concept contrasts with Jivanmukti which refer to achieving “liberation while alive”.