

Baghawat Geeta, Chapter 4, Class 61

Greetings All,

Shloka # 18:

शुद्धचित्तो यो यत्किञ्चिदपि कुरुतु ॥
यत्किञ्चिदपि न कुरुतु शुद्धचित्तो यः ॥ 4.18 ॥

Whoso beholds non-work in work and work in non-work is wise among men; he is integrated; he does all works.

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, by way of introducing the nature of karma, Sri Krishna is discussing the essence of the Upanishads in shloka's 18 to 24. Of these shlokas, 18th is considered a key shloka; wherein Sri Krishna talks about atma-anatma viveka; the difference between the higher-I in me, and the lower-I in me; the higher-I is called Atma; and the lower-I is called Ahamkara.

The higher-I atma has been talked about in the second chapter, where Sri Krishna pointed out that this atma is of the nature of consciousness, distinct from the body and all pervading. It is an akarta as it does not perform any action. It is only a witness. And this akarta-atma, this eka-atma; this poorna atma is my higher nature; and I have got a lower-I also called ahamkara; and this lower-I is nothing but the mind. The mind-principle is called the lower-I. Mind by itself is inert. It becomes sentient through the blessing of Atma. Citing example of a bulb, it is similar to the filament in a bulb that needs electricity to energize it. Such a mind when blessed by Atmatvam becomes sentient and is called Ahamkara. This finite Ahamkara is my inferior "I" or ego. Ahamkara has to perform action, as it is its nature. Ahamkara, thus, accumulates Punyam and Papam. And this ahamkara alone takes another body

and again exhausts the punya papam and in the process acquires fresh punya papam; and thus the punarapi jananam; punarapi maranam, samsara cycle continues for ahamkara. There is no way of stopping this ahamkara, because this ahamkara is motivated, activated, because of our identification. Sri Krishna says, by self-knowledge, we learn to own up to the higher-I, rather than the lower-I.

The moment the shift to higher "I" happens, the lower "I" loses momentum and it will stop. A Gyani is not a patron of Ahamkara. This shift from lower "I" to higher "I" is called wisdom. I own up to my Akarta nature, even while Ahamkara is active. This detachment from Ahamkara is the benefit of the wisdom. The question comes up, as to who is leading the dog? Is it the owner or the dog? Right now Ahamkara is leading me. Ahamkara has a function, but I should not be enslaved by it. The word Swamy means one who is master of his own Ahamkara. The word Aswamy means the opposite of Swamy.

What drives human beings to accomplish things? What is the driving force? In human beings the driving force behind any pursuit is that without those accomplishment(s), I feel small; That is why people always say, I want to be somebody in life; because he or she feels that right now he or she is a nobody.

And therefore I have a sense of smallness. Through accomplishment, I am trying to be somebody, I am trying to become full and complete; fulfillment or poornatvam is the goal. Unfortunately such a person never gets the poornatvam as the finite ahamkara plus finite accomplishment is still equal to finite ahamkara. Previously I was a miserable BA; then a miserable MA; and now a miserable Phd. The misery continues because finite plus finite is equal to only finite and not infinite. It is the finite ahamkara struggling to become poornaha and life becomes a failure.

Gyani knows everything is finite. Ahamkara can never be poornaha. He accepts Ahamkara and lets it perform. He,

however, seeks Poornatvam in the higher I. It is ever Poornaha. He enjoys poornaha at higher level, while performing action at lower level. He does not feel fulfilled in completion of projects. Thus, he is ready to quit the world at any time.

Shloka # 19:

सर्वं कर्तव्यं ज्ञानमग्निं प्रदीपयति ॥
ज्ञानमग्निं प्रदीपयति सर्वं कर्तव्यं ॥४.१९॥

Him the wise call a man of discrimination, all of whose undertakings are free from desire-prompted imaginations and all whose works have been consumed in the fire of knowledge.

Once a Gyani has discovered poornatvam , will he be motivated to work? Generally activities are born out of necessity or dissatisfaction. If all people are satisfied then there will be no motive to work. The general belief is that discontentment leads to action or work. This is a misconception, says Swamiji. Sri Krishna says a person can also work out of fullness. Such a person has no axe to grind. A gyani can contribute with contentment. What drives him? Compassion drives him. He has universal identification and universal compassion. It becomes his nature.

Heat can't be separated from fire or light from the Sun. So also, compassion is intrinsic to a Gyani. It is compassion without motives. Backed by compassion, he acts according the need of the situation. It is like a mother with a child. Compassion crystallizes into action.

His actions are not due to lacking anything or loneliness. Without performing activity too he is full. He is free from the desire to fulfill himself. He is free from future projections. Thus, we are not comfortable with ourselves. Thus, one asks: How will I look in this dress; with this girl; with this house; etc? There is a big gulf between the small "I" and the higher "I" in such a person. This causes

restlessness in him. I am not happy with the present, I am a dissatisfied "I". That is why Swami Dayananda Saraswathi says: I have rejected myself and when I cannot accept myself, I cannot accept the world also; I find fault with every person, every job, every set up and every house. The problem is not with the world rather the self-rejection expresses itself in the form of world rejection. Conversely, self-acceptance, expresses itself in the form of world acceptance. Again Swamiji beautifully says: a Gyani is at home with himself as he is and therefore at home with the world as it is. There is no dreaming and projections. He lives in the present. I am fine as I am; and enjoy doing whatever I can do, and whatever I have to do. He does not travel from unhappiness to happiness. He is always in a state of happiness.

There is no connection between set up and poornatvam. Set up belongs to the lower level, egoistic level and poornatvam belongs to a higher level. To put it in Upanishadic language, the set up belongs to vyavaharika satya; poornatvam belongs to paramarthica satya; he does not mix up order of reality. And another interesting thing happens to such a person, the Gyani. When he dwells in the lower "I", the karmas, the actions, do not produce punyam or papam. Only when I am identified with ahamkara or when there is a sankalpa, only then punyam and papam are produced. Since Gyani does not have the crystallized-ego, it does not

produce punyam and papam. That is why in Tatva Bodha, we saw, Gyani does not generate agami karma. All his karmas are destroyed. Citing example of a roasted seed although it looks like a normal seed it cannot germinate anymore. So too a Gyani cannot produce any more karma's.

For roasting Ahamkara you need the Gyana Agni. By this fire Ahamkara is burned down. Such a person is called Pandita. Panda means self knowledge. Chapter 2, shloka 11, also refers to Pandita.

Shloka # 20:

शुद्धचित्तोऽपि शुद्धचित्तोऽपि शुद्धचित्तोऽपि शुद्धचित्तोऽपि
शुद्धचित्तोऽपि शुद्धचित्तोऽपि शुद्धचित्तोऽपि शुद्धचित्तोऽपि 4.20

Giving up attachment to the fruits of works, eternally content, independent, the man, engaged in works as he is, does nothing at all.

Sri Krishna pointed out that a Gyani is free from karma and sankalpa. He is a free person. Citing analogy of Thermometer (slave of surrounding) and thermostat (controller of surroundings), Agyani is like a thermometer while Gyani is like a thermostat. Therefore in one, he is a slave of the set up, in

the other, he is the master of the set up and what makes you a master is only Gyanam. Sri Krishna says any person of any status can obtain Gyanam. A gyani is at peace even amidst society while an Agyani is miserable even in an Ashrama. Varna, ashrama, religion, sex, profession and nationality do not matter for obtaining Gyanam. There two types of Gyani's:

- GrihasthaGyani: A householder can also become a Gyani. Shlokas 20,22,23 and 24 discuss Grihastha Gyani.
- Sanyasi Gyani: Shloka # 21 talks of Sanyasi Gyani.

Shloka # 20, second line:

Grihastha Gyani:

He has to perform pancha maha yagyaha. He is also extremely active. The difference is that he does not feel fulfillment through activities. Gyani does not connect fulfillment with his pursuit. His fulfillment is in the higher "I". Gyani's satisfaction does not come from the set up. He is equally happy without it. If I give support, it is love. If I seek support, it is attachment.

Once he has poornatvam he does not lean on any external

factor. Strength comes from knowledge. He does not have any psychological dependence although he may have physical dependence. He expects results from his actions but he is not concerned about them. In effect he does not worry about results. If expectation is not met what to do? Swami Dayananda Saraswathi used to say, " Success in life is preparation for failure". With such a healthy mind a Gyani performs his actions. In philosophical sense, he remembers his higher Self. In a psychological sense, he is free, as his actions do not create any anxiety in him.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta Class 60 – Chapter 4

Greetings All,

Shloka # 15:

ॐ कर्मणो भक्त्या चोत्तमं योगं योगिभिर्गुणैः सह ॥
ॐ कर्मणो भक्त्या चोत्तमं योगं योगिभिर्गुणैः सह ॥ 4.15 ॥

Knowing thus was work done by ancient seekers after liberation. Therefore you too do only work, as was done by the ancients in bygone days.

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said,

Arjuna wanted to escape his Sva-dharma that is killing his own kith and kin. It was causing him great mental distress. And also it is said in the scriptures "By actions one is bound". Whenever we take up any action there is a strain on our personality. Will we succeed or not is a question that bothers us. This causes anxiety. Also the result of action is not fully dependent on our efforts. Result depends on other factors some of which are not in our control. So, future is uncontrollable. Also, results may not be up to our expectation.

Arjuna is experiencing all this on the battlefield. He wants to escape his Karma. Sri Krishna, however, is teaching him not to escape karma. Maximum you can do is you can change the karma from one action to another action; and often you find that when you change

the field of action, it ends up like falling from the frying pan into the fire. While you can change the action you cannot give up the action. Therefore Krishna wants to teach Arjuna how to be involved in action but not be affected by the action.

Sri Krishna says, only through Gyanam can one insulate his or her mind from the tyranny of action. Once insulated, the action will appear like a game, a leela. For a Gyani it becomes a sport while for an Agyani it is a major undertaking. This method of insulation is available to every being. The method is not a new one. Your own forefathers have used it. Why don't you use it as well?

Shloka # 16:

कर्म कर्मण्येवाङ्गघ्नं कर्मभूयान्मया
कुरुष्वैतद्विद्वान्मया तदङ्गं विद्वान् ॥4.16॥

What is work? What is non-work? In respect of these questions the sages even are deluded. Therefore, I shall elucidate the nature of work, by knowing which you will be delivered from

evil.

Sri Krishna presents Gyanam as armor. Once you say Gyanam, the question arises Gyanam about what? It is knowledge of the nature of Karma. Where does it arise? Who does it belong to? This enquiry is important, as we have taken it for granted. Once we thought everything went around the earth. Then science discovered that everything goes around the sun. Thus, when we take action we feel "I am" doing the action. Sri Krishna says "you" are not doing the action.

If you want to get out of stressful situations you need to know about the nature of Karma. It is a very subtle topic.

Even great philosophers are confused about what is action and what is inaction? He says I will deal with this topic now. It is not an academic discussion. It has practical value. By this knowledge you will be freed from all types of Ashudha's (samsara) or negatives. Do you want to be a thermometer (one that measures a situation) or a thermostat (one that controls a situation)?

An Agyani is enslaved by situations.

A Gyani is master of situations.

Shloka # 17:

कार्यं कर्मणो विदुः कर्मणो विदुः कर्मणो विदुः
कार्यं कर्मणो विदुः कर्मणो विदुः कर्मणो विदुः 4.17

Indeed you ought to know about work; also you ought to know about bad work; and, besides, you ought to know about non-work. Profound is the course of work.

Sri Krishna says, not only I am going to teach about Karma, but also about its nature, also about wrong Karma (Vikarma) and also about Akarma (inaction).

I will discuss about action, inaction and wrong action. This

knowledge you have to work to gain it.

This is an introduction to Gyanam as an insulating material.

Gathihi: in the shloka means, Swaroopam or nature of action.

Shloka # 18:

कार्यं कुरुते न च कुरुते कार्यं न च कुरुते न च कुरुते ॥ ४.१८ ॥
॥ ४.१८ ॥ कार्यं कुरुते न च कुरुते कार्यं न च कुरुते न च कुरुते ॥ ४.१८ ॥

Whoso beholds non-work in work and work in non-work is wise among men; he is integrated; he does all works.

From # 18-24, Sri Krishna deals with knowledge or solution to all problems. This shloka is the core of chapter #4. It is a very impotent shloka in the entire Gita. It condenses the teaching of all Upanishads. Hence Gita is also considered an Upanishad. Essence of Upanishad is Gyanam. It is discussed in chapter # 2 of Gita and now in Chapter # 4 as well. Shloka # 18 is very significant and a difficult one to understand. This shloka has language of contradictions.

The literal translation is as follows:

“Wise person sees action in in-action.

Wise person also sees in-action in action.”

The contradiction:

If you see a thing wrongly, can you be a wise person?

Shankaracharya has written a large commentary on this shloka. This shloka has also been called a knotty shloka of Gita. In chapter 2, shloka 2.69 is also a knotty shloka. These verses are called the knotty verses because when Vyasa wanted Mahaganapathy to become the scribe; Mahaganapathy put a condition that once I start writing, I cannot stop. Therefore, you have to continuously dictate and if you stop for some reason I will leave. Vyasa agreed to this condition of

Ganapathy but he placed a condition on Ganapathy as well. He said when you take down my commentary you should know the meaning of it, as well.

Thus, Vyasa composed knotty verses intermittently, to gain some time and Ganapathy some time to grasp them. Such shlokas are called Grantha Grandhi.

As per Vedanta every individual's personality consists of two parts:

1) Anatma: Consisting of the body, mind thought complex.

2) Atma: consisting of the Conscious principle that makes the body, mind and thought complex sentient. It can be compared to the electricity that makes the bulb illumine. This invisible principle is all pervading and independent and it continues even when the body is gone. There may be many bulbs but the electricity illumining them is one and the same. Similarly the Atma blesses the body, mind and thought complex and thus makes it sentient.

Wise person also sees in-action in action."

We discussed Atma and Anatma in chapter 2. While there is only Atma, Anatma's are many. Atma is all pervading while Anatma is limited in nature.

The Atma being all pervading cannot perform any action. Action involves physical or mental movement. So also it is with space, which cannot perform any action. While air, water, and fire can move, space cannot. Therefore, the all-pervading Consciousness is action-less. Hence, it need not renounce Karma. Consciousness is ever free from Karma.

The Anatma (Ahamkara) can never be free from action. It is a material entity. Matter is in eternal motion. Even a standing wall is full of atoms that are in motion.

In the book " Tao of Physics" the author describes Nataraja's

eternal Dance. How do you know that he is eternally dancing? If you look at his jata, it is always parallel to the ground; when will the jata be parallel to the ground, it is possible only under one condition; when it is fiercely moving; that is why it is Natarāja's picture as vishwa roopa that is in eternal motion.

Thus, the smallest of atoms and the largest of galaxies are in motion.

Anatma's motion can never stop. Even if you see it at rest, it is still in motion in a potential form. Karma cannot be given up in Anatma.

Therefore, focusing on Atma own up to the permanent state of its rest. This inaction is called Gyana Karma Sanyasa.

A wise person sees the permanent peace of Atma even though there is action in Anatma. He discovers peace even in Anatma. So, discover peace amidst outer activity. Citing an example, even when the hand moves, the light illumining the hand is not moving. Similarly even when the body moves, the awareness does not move. Actors move but the screen does not move. Therefore, turn your attention to the screen.

“Wise person sees action in in-action.

Discussing the second part of the shloka, action in inaction, when Anatma is resting (sleep) it appears action-less although actions reside in it in potential form. Thus, in sleep, all actions are waiting in seed form. The wise person sees the potential action in the action less-ness of the body mind complex. It means it is explicitly active or potentially active. Atma is ever inactive.

When action overwhelms me we don't know how to get out of it. We feel overwhelmed. It is like catching the tail of a tiger, after sometime you will tire while the tiger will not. You then look for a place without action or shantam or shivam.

This place is my own shanta swaroopam. So a wise person knows how to dip into his own tranquility. Sri Krishna wants to give us a taste of this shantam. This is provided to us during sleep. At that time you don't have a Karta personality. Deep sleep is absolute Ananda. This is Atma Swaroopam.

For Gyani, this atma ananda is available all the time. He is called a real Yogi or person of fulfillment.

Shlokas # 19-24 are commentaries on shloka # 18.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Saddarshanam, Class 15

Greetings All,

Shloka # 24:

The Supreme, having distributed light to the intellect, Himself shines hidden inside the intellect. Having turned the intellect inwards, here within the intellect, by uniting, the vision of the Lord takes place, not by any other method.

Continuing his teaching, Swami Paramarthananda said, in this shloka Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi is pointing out that the Atma alone lends consciousness to the mind. Thus, the mind with this borrowed consciousness appears as if it is Self-effulgent. This mind is then capable of illuminating the external world. It has to work to know the external world. It,

however, does not have to work to know the Atma, as the Atma is self-evident. Therefore, Self-knowledge involves turning attention to the ever-experienced Consciousness and understanding the fact that the ever-experienced consciousness is limitless. Intellect is not required for understanding Self Consciousness.

The word Dhiye in the shloka means giving Consciousness to the mind.

This ever-experienced Consciousness is ever present behind the mind. So, how does Atma remain hidden? If Atma is ever experienced, how can it remain hidden? This is a contradiction, says Swamiji. Citing an example, it is like the movie screen. Without the movie screen the characters in the movie cannot be experienced. In life the screen is never noticed because of our preoccupation with the movie. Experiencing a thing is different from deliberately paying attention to something. This also true with space to which we do not pay attention to. If asked, what is on my hand, most of us will mention the hair, the fingernail etc. We will never mention the light on the hand that allows us see the hand. Due to our extroverted-ness we are preoccupied with the movie and don't pay attention to the screen. The same phenomenon occurs with our mind. We are so busy with our thoughts that we don't pay attention to the Consciousness, which is silence. So the two steps towards Self-knowledge are:

1. To pay attention to the ever experienced Consciousness.
2. With the help of scriptures negate all limitations of Atma and become aware of its limitless nature.

So, turn your attention away from all inert things (Samsara, body, mind and thought) and turn your attention to the ever-experienced Consciousness that illumines (makes known) the thought. Just as during watching the movie, you are asked to pay attention to the screen, the process followed here is also similar. It is one of changing the attention of the

intellect. This is not a new experience rather it is just new information that the screen is not affected by the events in the movie. Tragedies and comedies do not affect it. Similarly, I, the ever-experienced Consciousness, is not affected by the events going on in my life. Don't be carried away by the events happening to you. Intellect alone can reveal this to you.

Guptaha in shloka means not paid attention to.

Na Anya means no other darshanam.

Therefore, turn your attention within your mind and connect the Budhi to the ever-experienced Consciousness.

This alone is Ishwara Drishti. Conscious attention to Consciousness is this Drishti. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi does not consider all other Darshanam's real. He says they don't liberate you. Therefore, change your understanding of yourself. Anatma Ishwara is only a Prathibhashika Ishwara or Vyavaharika Ishwara.

Shloka # 25:

The body does not say, "I am". Nobody says, "I was not", in deep sleep. Search with your intellect, the birthplace of that "I", upon whose rise, everything rises!

Here Bhagwan Ramana Maharishi talks about the mysterious nature of the ego. Ego is a misconception born out of ignorance. On enquiry it will disappear. Discussing Ahamkara, Bhagwan Ramana Maharishi asks, who is saying, "I am"?

Body can't say it and Atma can't say it either. Anatma body is inert as such it cannot say, " I am". Atma cannot say, "I am" as it does not have a mouth. Saying involves an action, the motion of the mouth. Therefore Atma can't say it. If so, who is saying it? It must be an entity different from Atma or Anatma. Unfortunately there is no other such entity. If so,

then who is saying it? The answer is it must be an entity that is a mixture of Anatma and Atma. This is called Ahamkara. It is the one that says, "I am". Citing example of a bowl of salad, one can say there is mango, there is orange, there is cucumber etc., but there is no substance called salad. Salad is only a verbal expression. Ahamkara is also a mysterious entity with only a verbal existence.

If body had sentiency, death will never happen. So, someone else is saying, "I am this body". Nobody would say I was non-existent in sleep. We know "I" exist in three states of existence. If sleep becomes our death (a state of death), we will never sleep. So, the real "I" exists in all three states. Does Atma say, "I am"? Atma also does not and cannot say that. If it said so, in Sushupthi, Atma does not say, "I am". Therefore there is someone other than Atma and Deha, called Ahamkara that is asleep in sleep, but awake in waking state. It is the cause of "I am". The Samsari "I" is neither body nor Atma.

All transactions and limitations arise with Ahamkara. So, attack Ahamkara. So, find the source of Ahamkara (by enquiry) with the help of intellect. Swamiji says it is a misconception that one has to transcend the intellect. As per Bhagwan Ramana Maharishi you require intellect for Self-Knowledge. Intellect is, however, not required to experience the Atma. The Atma is ever experienced. Intellect is required to pay attention to the ever-experienced Consciousness.

Knowledge comes to us during Vedanta Sravanam. In meditation this does not happen. No new knowledge comes from meditation. For knowledge, one needs Guru Shastra Upadesa. This is the Vedantic parampara.

Shloka #26:

The body does not know. Of the Truth, there is no birth. In the middle of these two, another of the size of the body

rises, which is of the names ego, knot, bondage, subtle mind, mind, the realm of becoming and the individual.

Bhagwan Ramana Maharishi continues on the mysterious Ahmakara. Ahamkara has some features of Atma as well as some features of Anatma. Upto Shloka # 27, he discusses Ahmakara.

The inert body can never say, I am. If it can say so, then it will become sentient and it wont die. Can Atma say "I am" the Conscious Being? Atma cannot undergo any modification. If it were to say, it would be " I am the eternal Consciousness" because it is birth-less. Atma is not mortal.

So this entity has taken properties of body and Atma and is called Ahamkara. It is the one that says I am a mortal sentient being. So this third entity comes into being. It is of the size of the body. It is a localized Ahamkara. It is an imposter I or false I. It has several names. It is called the Knot, as it cannot be easily removed. It has been placed a long time ago. Ahamkara cannot be removed easily.

In spite of Vedantic knowledge Ahamkara will be difficult to remove, hence it is called Granthi. Ahamkara is formed by joining of the two (Mortal + Consciousness). It is called a Knot or Granthi. A third name is bondage. So, Ahamkara is bondage or Vibhandi. Ahamkara is not freedom.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Foot Note:

1. Pāramārthika (paramartha, absolute), the absolute level, "which is absolutely real and into which both other reality levels can be resolved".^[web 5] This experience can't be sublated by any other experience.^[20]
2. Vyāvahārika (vyavahara), or samvriti-saya^[17] (empirical

or pragmatical), “our world of experience, the phenomenal world that we handle every day when we are awake”.^[web 5] It is the level in which both *jiva* (living creatures or individual souls) and *Iswara* are true; here, the material world is also true.

3. Prāthibhāsika (pratibhasika, apparent reality, unreality), “reality based on imagination alone”.^[web 5] It is the level in which appearances are actually false, like the illusion of a snake over a rope, or a dream.

It is at the level of the highest truth (*paramārtha*) that there is no origination.^[7] Gaudapada states that, from the absolute standpoint, not even “non-dual” exists.^[2]

Bagawat Geeta, Class 59, Chapter 4

Greetings All,

Shloka # 13:

वर्णश्रेण्युत्पत्त्यां वर्णानामुत्पत्त्यां च
वर्णानामुत्पत्त्यां वर्णानामुत्पत्त्यां च 4.13

The fourfold class-system according to the divisions of Prakrti's constituents and works, has been ordained by Me. Though I am its author, know Me to be the immutable non-agent.

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, Sri Krishna is talking about Varna Ashrama Dharma as described by him through the Vedas. According to Vedas, society is

divided into four classes. Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. These four classes can also be seen from three other perspectives. They are: Jati (parentage), Karma (profession) and Guna (character) respectively.

When a Jati Brahmana becomes an elected MP, he has become a Kshatriya by Karma. He could even become a Vaishya if he spends a lot of time chasing after money. Thus, there are many permutations and combinations that are possible.

Are there any gradations among the three?

In Jati, all four are created equal.

In karma too all occupations are equally important for the peace and progress of society. The mantra Purushasuktham says all four are parts of God. The four parts are Face (Knowledge, Brahmana), Arm (Soldier, Kshatriya), Thighs and Knees (Money, Vaishya) and legs (Movement or work, Shudra).

Every organ is important. You realize this only when an organ does not function. Thus, there is no difference between professions. Swamiji says India's caste problems exist because this equality in professions has been violated.

However, in Guna there is gradation. A Noble person is superior to others. He will not demand it but people will themselves respect him. All of us should strive to become Guna Brahmana. Guna Brahmana is superior to Guna Kshatriya, Guna Vaishya or Guna Shudra. This is because he is the one closest to knowledge. He is a Satva Guna Pradhana. Guna Kshatriya is a little away, as he still has to attain knowledge. Guna Vaishya is even further away as he is still selfish, although very active. Guna shudra is lowest. He has not even started selfish activity. He has a long way to go.

Puranic stories such as Nandanar are about a non-brahmin although he was a Guna Brahmana.

Jati: Do we have a choice regarding Jathi?

In Jati, there is no choice. We can't change our parentage. Moksha does not require Jati as a basis for it.

Guna: Do we have a choice regarding our Guna?

Can a Guna shudra become a Guna Brahmana? Here there is choice. Character change is possible. All sadhanas are to help us in this process. We are born Tamo Guna Pradhana. It is the intrinsic nature of our body to be lazy. In Tatva Bodha we learnt that body is made from Tamas Amsha.

So, we have to move from Tamas pradhana to Rajas Pradhana. Rituals (karmakanda) can help us in this process. And then, move from Rajas to Satva Guna. One should learn to be contemplative. Upasana kandam helps with this change. Thus, after I become a Guna Brahmana, one has to go to the Nirguna state (Ishwara Aikyam) through Gyana Kanda.

Do we have a choice regarding Karma or occupation?

We do have a choice. We can choose our occupation based upon:

1. Jathi or hereditary profession
2. Guna: based upon inclination.

Both have advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages:

With jathi, there is no need to choose. One is already exposed to the atmosphere. Even a child listens to its mothers singing in its womb. Preparation takes place early, including food.

Disadvantages: If he does not like the profession he choses, life can be miserable. Even today, Jathi based jobs are quite common.

Guna:

Advantages: There is no strain in person. He looks forward to Monday. Doing what I enjoy is important to a healthy life.

Disadvantages: I can never get an early training. Inclination becomes evident later in life. I may not choose correctly.

Drona and Vishwamithra are examples where Jathi was dominant.

Shastra warns us; let not money be a basis for profession. If this happens arts and crafts may die.

This is the Varna Vyavastha per Vedas and as per God.

Sri Krishna says even though I have created the four-fold class of humanity; still I am active all the time. However, these actions do not bind me. So, Arjuna do not escape your Karma. You can, even performing your Karmas, enjoy peace. Even though I do all activity they don't disturb me. I am not affected.

Shloka # 14:

ॐ कामं कर्मफलं कामुकैर्लभ्यते ॥ कामं कर्मफलं कामुकैर्लभ्यते ॥
कामं कामं कामुकैर्लभ्यते कामुकैर्लभ्यते ॥ कामुकैर्लभ्यते ॥ 4.14 ॥

Works do not taint me; I desire not their fruits. Whoso knows Me to be such, is not bound by works.

Sri Krishna says Karma and its phalam cannot disturb me. I am not concerned about the results of action. Lord will not do any injustice to me.

As per Vedas planning for result is different from worrying about the result. Planning makes me efficient in the present, while worrying about result will make me deficient in present.

How to know if I am planning or worrying? Planning is a deliberate action. Worrying is not deliberate rather it is only a mechanical reaction. We cannot deliberately worry. It just happens.

Once planned and implemented, don't worry. I am not concerned about outcome of Mahabharata war. I have knowledge, which is the best remedy for all problems. My knowledge is my weapon. It is my Sudarshana chakra. You can also get this Chakra.

“ So, this is freedom in spite of responsibility. This is the greatest secret. Such a Gyani is not bound by Karma.

Shloka # 15:

शुद्धं चित्तं तत्रैव स्थितं तदात्मनो यदात्मनि ॥
तदात्मनि यदात्मनि तदात्मनि यदात्मनि ॥4.15॥

Knowing thus was work done by ancient seekers after liberation. Therefore you too do only work, as was done by the ancients in bygone days.

Sri Krishna says your forefathers knew this secret knowledge. They did not run away from responsibility. They had inner peace despite external activity. Therefore Arjuna staying in Grihastashrama perform your Jathi based Karma just like your forefathers did.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

there is constant action and it is inevitable. Now with Karma there are always side effects. Karma means responsibility, tension, and the end result may not be always the way we desired. Because of this there is also mental disturbance. Sri Krishna says we must accept Karma as a part of life but we also need to find solutions for the side effects. This is much like some of the drugs we take. I should remain in action without being disturbed. To accomplish this one method is adopting Karma Yoga. Here Sri Krishna also talks of Gyanam as another solution. With Gyanam one is not affected by action or its results. Citing example of the ooze coming out of a Jackfruit, Swamiji says this white ooze sticks to your hands. People apply oil in their hands so that the ooze does not stick. So also Gyanam is the oil that prevents Karma from sticking to us. And this is the topic of this chapter as well.

Sri Krishna says look at me and my life. I have gone through a lot including failures. In spite of my activities I remain untouched by action or results of my karma.

Sri Krishna as creator also had a lot of duties. He was a creator, sustainer and destroyer. I also designed a way of life for human beings to lead and it is in a manual called the Vedas. It teaches a life of harmony for both the individual as well as society. Such a life style is the Varna Ashrama Plan. **It has Varna**, the four fold division of society. This division allows social harmony and growth in individual, community, nation and cosmos.

Ashrama, describes the four stages of life of an individual that is: Brahmacharya, Grihastashrama, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa ashrama.

In this shloka Sri Krishna talks of Varna Ashrama.

Swamiji described Ashrama as follows:

Brahmacharya: This is the life of a student. In this stage he learns about the human goals. One goal is a material goal of

how to earn a living. The second goal is a spiritual goal for inner growth. One goal is outward facing while other is inward facing. A balance has to be struck between outer and inner growth.

Grihastashrama: Life as a householder. This is the implementation stage of the learning from Brahmacharya. It is a Karma Pradhana life. Activities are extrovert in nature. Hinduism also supports material growth and is not just a religion of escapism, as some would have us believe. All desires are fulfilled in a legitimate manner. Background should be spiritual. His desires will gradually be refined. It is a stage full of activity. Pancha Maha Yagna is usually practiced in this stage to purify the mind. Pancha Maha Yagna was detailed in Chapter 3.

3) **Vanaprashtha:** is a stage of turning the mind inward. This is an Upasana Pradhana Ashrama. Inside or outside his house he will turn inwards.

4) **Sanyasa Ashrama:** He takes Sanyasa either in the house or leaving the house. Either way he will dissociate mentally. He will handover everybody's responsibility to Ishwara. He is in a more detached state of mind. This is a Gyana Pradhana stage.

Through these four ashramas the individual has catered to Self and Society. This is like a tree that gives fruits for the benefit of others but also produces seeds to ensure its own propagation.

This is known as ashrama vyavastha.

Shloka # 13:

वृक्षस्यैवमिदं लक्षणं त्रैलोक्ये
वृक्षस्यैवमिदं लक्षणं त्रैलोक्ये 4.13

The fourfold class-system according to the divisions of Prakrti's constituents and works, has been ordained by Me.

Though I am its author, know Me to be the immutable non-agent.

Varna Vyavastha:

Broadly there are four varnas. They are Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. While these are the four divisions there are three perspectives on how they are based.

The first basis is Character or Guna or Svabhava. Thus there is Guna Brahmana, Kshatriya etc.

Second is based upon profession or Karma. Thus we have Karma Brahmana, Karma Kshatriya etc.

The third is based upon birth or Janma or Jathi. Thus we have Jathi Brahmana, Jathi Kshatriya etc. Swamiji clarified that Jathi is not the same as caste.

Guna Perspective:

What character makes what?

Guna Brahmana is one in whom Satva dominates, or it is Satva Pradhana. Rajas and then Tamas follow it. Satva pradhana represents tranquility and intellectual efficiency. It has been detailed in chapter # 14 of the Gita. Rajo Guna is a state of hyper activity. Tamo guna is a state without Satva or Rajas or during sleep. It suppresses inner and outer activity.

Swamiji classified them as follows:

SRT: Thus in Guna Brahmana it is Satva (S), followed by Rajas (R) and then Tamas (T).

RST: In Guna Kshatriya it is RST. Here one is active, but selflessly.

RTS: Rajo Guna dominant backed by Tamo Guna. He is also active but is very selfish. This is Guna Vaishya.

TRS: Tamo Guna pradhana. Most of his time is spent in sleeping. Unskilled, mechanical person. This is Guna Shudra.

Profession or Karma perspective:

1. Karma Brahmana: All intellectual work. Teaching, research, spiritual and non spiritual etc.
2. Karma Kshatriya: Maintenance of law and order, defense etc.
3. Karma Vaishya: Producing wealth, Industry, Trade and business.
4. Karma Shudra: All activities that help all three above. Unskilled work.

Thus karma Brahmana need not be a Guna Brahmana. A Karma Brahmana selling Gita books may be more a Karma Vaishya.

Jathi Perspective (by birth):

- Jathi Brahmana. He can also become a Karma Kshatriya.
- Jathi Kshatriya
- Jathi Vaishya
- Jathi Shudra

Thus there are many permutations and combinations of these Varnas.

From Jathi (birth) perspective all four Varnas are considered equal. Thus, birth does not provide any superiority. All jathi's should be equally respected.

From Karma Perspective as well all professions are equally important. None is superior. Purushasuktham shows the four parts of the body of God as representing the four Varnas.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 56

In the beginning of Chapter 4, Lord Krishna talked about the glory of the Gita as vedasaarah and that He alone taught the Vedic wisdom in the beginning of creation and is teaching the same Vedic wisdom now, in the name of Gita.

Upon hearing this, Arjuna has a doubt due to the teacher being the same with a great gap in time. Lord Krishna introduces the topic of avatara to answer this question. He says "I am the original Vishnu who gave out the Vedic wisdom then, and that Vishnu is now in the form of Bhagavan Krishna". Not only is the Lord teaching now but he says I am aware of the fact that I am Bhagavan. I alone have taken all the janmas as Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, etc. I have now taken Krishna shariram. I know all my previous avataras, therefore I am Bhagavan Vishnu's avatara.

Both the avatara and the jeeva-janma take a body. However, there are fundamental differences between the two in the Cause, Nature and Purpose.

The Cause: Jnaanam is the cause of Ishvara avatara. Ajnaanam is the cause of jeeva-janma.

The Nature: The Lord's shariram is directly born out of maya. Jeeva's body is not directly born out of maya but through the intermediary process of the five elements.

The Purpose: Jeeva arrives to exhaust his prarabhda punya-paapa. Ishvara arrives to uplift the world.

Lord Krishna points out these three differences. The third difference of purpose is in Verse 7.

Chapter 4 Sloka 7

Chapter 4 Sloka 7

Whenever there is decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, then I manifest Myself.

Whenever there is decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, then I manifest Myself.

Whenever there is decline of righteousness, O Arjuna, and rise of unrighteousness, then I manifest Myself.

Whenever there is a decline in dharma. Dharma, as seen in Chapter 3, means cosmic harmony or rhythm. If you take the whole universe as a body, the cosmic orderliness is called cosmic health. At the cosmic level, if there is harmony, it is called dharma. And this harmony alone protects the universe. Dharma alone is the health of the world. It alone sustains the world. Once the orderliness is disturbed, the whole cosmos will be destroyed and we will not be able to survive. And if this inbuilt system doesn't work, Bhagavan will have to interfere.

Krishna says here, as a sthiti karta of the universe, I will come. Not very often but whenever there is a declension of dharma. And naturally, when the adharma, corruption increases. Then, I myself will consciously, deliberately, voluntarily, take the body.

Chapter 4 Sloka 8

Chapter 4 Sloka 8

Whenever there is decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, then I manifest Myself.

for the protection of the good and for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness (I) am born in every age.

For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I am born in every age.

How will the Lord protect dharma and destroy adharma? Krishna says that dharma is protected by protecting the people who follow dharma. Therefore, Krishna says, – I take an avatara to protect the dharmic people. How is adharma destroyed? Only by destroying the people that are the cause of adharma.

We should note that the adharmic people can be destroyed in two ways.

One method is by converting them from adharma to dharma by sama, dana, bheda. When you convert a person from adharma to dharma without doing himsa, you have destroyed the adharmic person. The second is by destroying the adharmic person itself. Bhagavan tries this first, giving them sufficient opportunity to change. Krishna goes as a messenger to Duryodhana and suggests to compromise with the Pandavas but he refuses. This means that sama, dana and bheda have failed. Therefore, Krishna said (from Chapter 2, Verse 18). Arjuna, destroy them!

Krishna says, and |

Bhagavan established dharma in a different way. A kshatriya and a brahmana can establish dharma, each in their own way. A kshatriya promotes the dharmic people and punishes the adharmic people. A brahmana sustains dharma by teaching which is the better form of promoting dharma. Punishment is only temporary and will not promote dharma permanently. The ultimate promotion of dharma is for a person to have value for

dharma. To know the long term effects of violating dharma requires a sensitive mind. Sensitive mind is developed only by teaching not by advising. A kshatriya protects dharma by protecting the dharmic people and punishing the adhaarmic people. A brahmana protects dharma by teaching. Bhagavan's avatara has done both. Krishna protected dhaarmic people like Dharmaputra and destroyed adhaarmic people like Duryodhana. This was Krishna's kshatriya job. Then he taught Gita, or taught dharma. This is why he said $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$ | This is the reason that among the 10 avataras, Rama avatara and Krishna avatara are considered the most important ones. Teaching dharma is involved only in these two avataras. Rama taught by living dharma and Krishna, by teaching dharma. Ramayana is Rama ayanam means the way of life led by Rama.

$\square\square\square\square\square$ I am born or take avatara. $\square\square\square\square$ $\square\square\square\square$ every yuga or every time it is required.

$\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$

Chapter 4 Sloka 9

$\square\square\square\square$ $\square\square\square\square$ \square $\square\square$ $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$ $\square\square$ $\square\square\square\square\square\square$ $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$ \square
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$\square\square\square\square$ birth $\square\square\square\square$ action \square and $\square\square$ My $\square\square\square\square\square\square$ divine $\square\square\square\square$ thus $\square\square$ who $\square\square\square\square\square$ knows $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$ in true light $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$ having abandoned $\square\square\square\square$ the body $\square\square\square\square$ again $\square\square\square\square$ birth $\square\square$ not $\square\square$ gets $\square\square\square\square$ to Me $\square\square$ comes $\square\square$ he $\square\square\square\square\square$ 0 Arjuna.

He who thus know, in their true light, My divine birth and action, having abandoned the body, is not born again, he comes to Me, 0 Arjuna.

In this verse, Krishna tells, knowing the nature of God also leads to liberation.

However, Krishna had mentioned that atmajnaanam is the means of liberation in Chapter 2, Verse 55. Which actually leads to

liberation? Are there two paths? Is there a choice?

The scriptures have mentioned that there is only one means of liberation. Therefore, it must be that self-realization and God-realization are identical. Swamiji gives an example of a wave. When a wave knows its true nature, the realization is that it is water. The ocean's true nature is also water.

Therefore, whether you talk about the true nature of the wave or the true nature of the ocean, the true nature is one alone; there is only one central truth. Similarly, whether you realize your true nature which is the self or whether you realize the true nature of God, you arrive at one "sat chit Ananda svaroopam".

If a person says, I have realized the self but not God or vice versa; it means he knows neither God nor the self.

Krishna says in this verse, $\text{अहं कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः}$ suppose a person knows or realizes, $\text{अहं कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः}$ or understands the true nature of my avatara. The true nature is that Krishna shariram is not the real Krishna because Krishna shariram is subject to arrival and departure.

Real Krishna is, as we saw in Verse 6:

$\text{अहं कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः}$ |

$\text{अहं कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः}$ || 6||

Real Krishna is $\text{अहं कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः}$ (birth less), $\text{अहं कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः}$ (imperishable) real Krishna is free from birth and death; whereas Krishna shariram is subject to arrival and departure.

What is the real Krishna? Not the shariram but the Krishna Paramaatma behind the body. The one who knows this fact, and $\text{अहं कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः}$ the one who knows Bhagavan's sports (the divine sport is $\text{अहं कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः}$ $\text{अहं कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः}$ $\text{अहं कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः}$ from Chapter 4, Verse 8); the one who really understands the Lord, $\text{अहं कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः}$ means in His true nature.... $\text{अहं कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः}$ $\text{अहं कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः}$ $\text{अहं कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः}$ $\text{अहं कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः}$ $\text{अहं कश्चिद्गुणैर्लभ्यः}$

that person does not take a body again after death; he will attain liberation. So, the knowledge of the real Krishna will lead to liberation. What is liberation? He will become one with Me. After death, he will have no more birth or death |

Chapter 4 Sloka 10

Chapter 4 Sloka 10
Sloka 10

freed from attachment fear and anger absorbed in Me taking refuge in Me many purified My Being have attained.

Freed from attachment, fear and anger, absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, purified by the fire of knowledge, many have attained to My Being.

Realization of God has two stages.

First it is the realization of the Lord with a form.

The next is the realization of the Lord without a form.

This topic will be elaborated from Chapter 7 onwards.

The realization of the Lord with a form is in two stages.

One is appreciating the Lord with one form, as Rama or as Krishna or as Devi. We should all start with this for emotional health. Talk to God privately, as your confidante. The more you build this relationship, the more the Lord will become real. Then expand it further into realizing Bhagavan as One with the whole universe as his form. The final stage is the formless Ishvara. Every one has to go through these three stages, as they mature in their understanding.

The stages a seeker goes through is described in this sloka.

□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□ the first stage is to have realization of God in form and follow karma yoga by dedicating all your duties to the Lord and by accepting all situations as Ishvara prasada. The first stage is to surrender to Ishvara and converting the life into worship. By following a karma yoga way of life, we will purify the mind. This will result in getting rid of certain unhealthy ways of thinking. The mental impurities are of raga, bhaya and krodha. Raga is attachment. The attachment will gradually be shifted from the risky and fluid world to the permanently and secure God. The second stage is going from world dependence to God dependence. The raga or attachment to the world has shifted to attachment to Bhagavan. Then Bhagavan dependence will be converted into self-dependence. From world dependence to God dependence to self-dependence – where you discover the Bhagavan as the very self. When raga comes down, bhayam also comes down because fear is directly proportional to the attachment. Then krodha also will come down.

Saddarshanam, Class 10

When I say the I is the cause of all problem, that I represents the ahangara. “I am the cause of all problem” or “the I is the cause of all problem” are different. The HE and The You are dependent on The I. Second and third person are dependent on first person, that is the finite ahangara I. As long as I exist as ahangara, I am susceptible to the second and third person. The Aham in Aham Brahma Asmi, is not first person, not second person and not third person, but it is the person or purushaha. Ahangara is needed to teach Brahma Gyanam Gyani continues to have ahangara, but it is seen as mithya or vyavahariha sathyam.

How do you falsify ahangara or rope snake? For rope snake the adhishtanam is rope similarly for ahangara adhishtanam is sathyam. Ahangara is vyavarika sathyam and not paramarthika sathyam. The false notion that there is a third person, the false notion that there is a first person and the false notion that there is a second person is the notion of division. This notion of division goes away for a gyani but the experience of the notion will continue. Experience of stationary earth does not displace the knowledge that the earth keeps moving. Similarly the gyani goes through many experiences but does not let that displace his brahma gyanam.

Verse 17

The past and the future are, in their own time, the present. Giving up the truth of that present, will not discussion on the past and the future be laughable, like counting without the number one in the world?

So far Ramana Maharishi has been discussing spacial division. In this version, he is discussing time division.

Spacial division is horizontal division; time division is vertical division.

Kala division or time division is also mithya and is caused by Ahangara. The very idea of three division of time is myth. There is no thing called past existing outside. Yesterday is the past which does not exist today, but it did exist yesterday. When yesterday existed outside yesterday, it was not called yesterday. You only experience as a series of today. What is outside is today and today only. Similarly when you experience tomorrow, it is experienced only as today. So tomorrow does not exist outside. Yesterday is only a name for your memory and tomorrow is only a name for your projection. When you say past is hurting, it is not that past that is hurting, it is the memory that is hurting you. Memory exists in the past or present? Memory regarding the past

exist in the present. What hurts is not future but the thought of the future that hurts you. The future thought exist in the present. So you only have memories and projections and not past and future.

Past and future exist as present in their own time. Present alone exist. If you want to analyze time, you have to analyze past, present and future. Since there is no past and future, you have to analyze only present. Every present has its own time line. For example, for a day, 24 hours are not present. Only one of those hour can be present. Others are past or future. Similarly the hour itself is made up of past, present and future. Only one minute is present. Not the entire minute is present, only part of it is present. What is a point is a mystery in mathematics and similarly what is present is a mystery in vedanta; it is apparent notion caused by ahangara. The timeless consciousness is localized as finite present because of the ahangara, which is caused by deha abimana. The truth of kala thrayam is ahangara and the truth of hanagara is atma. Atma appears as desa thrayam and atma appears as kala thrayam.

Trying to understand time without understanding atma is like trying to understand the number without knowing the number one.

Bagahwat Geeta, Class 55

In Chapter 2, Krishna gave a gist of Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga.

In Chapter 3, Karma Yoga was elaborated.

In Chapters 4 and 5, Jnana Yoga is elaborated.

The 4th Chapter is the “jnana yoga pradhana”. There is a small diversion in the first 8 verses before diving into jnaana yoga. In the first three verses, Lord Krishna glorifies this knowledge consisting of Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga. The very essence of karma and jnana has already been taught in Veda at the beginning of the creation and this was received by Surya Bhagavan. This same wisdom is revived again in the name Gita. Veda was received by Surya Bhagavan and Gita is received by Arjuna. Therefore, it is an ancient and time-tested wisdom making it a reliable and a valid one.

Arjuna has a doubt about the timeline between creation and his current time. The times are different by few millennia, students are different yet the teacher is the same!

Krishna says in Chapter 4, Sloka 1:

मया तदात्मना कृता कर्मणि विदुषां विदुषां । (मया
कृतं कर्मणि विदुषां विदुषां I taught)

And now also, Chapter 4, Sloka 3:

मया तदात्मना कृता कर्मणि विदुषां विदुषां । (मया
कृतं कर्मणि विदुषां taught by Me).

Arjuna asks “Your birth is recent but your initial student’s birth was too long ago. How can a recent person teach an ancient student?”

Krishna answers Arjuna from Verse 5 though Verse 8.

Chapter 4 Sloka 5

मया तदात्मना कृता कर्मणि विदुषां विदुषां ।
मया तदात्मना कृता कर्मणि विदुषां विदुषां ।
मया तदात्मना कृता कर्मणि विदुषां विदुषां । 04.5

मया तदात्मना कृता कर्मणि विदुषां विदुषां । (मया
कृतं कर्मणि विदुषां may I My have passed away births

thy and 0 Arjuna them I know all
not

thou knowest 0 Parantapa.

The Blessed Lord said Many births of Mine have passed as well as of thine, 0 Arjuna; I know them all but thou knowest not, 0 Parantapa (scorcher of foes).

Lord Krishna introduces the topic of avatara in his answer to Arjuna. The Lord's incarnation is different from a human birth. Human birth is called janma but when the Lord appears in creation, it is called avatara. Krishna wants to point the differences between janma and avatara.

Swamiji elaborates on the topic of birth and incarnation before explaining Verse 5.

The differences between manushya janma and Ishvara avatara are:

Cause, Nature and Purpose

FIRST: the cause; at the cause level there is "kaaraNa bheda".

In the case of the birth of a jeeva, it is caused by ignorance of the jeeva.

Because of ignorance, the jeeva has the problem of ahankaara (ego).

Because of ego, there is the problem of karma.

Because of karma, there is the problem of punyam and paapam.

Because of punyam and paapam, there is the janma.

The birth of a jeeva is due to ignorance, so we can call this as a "fall of a jeeva".

In the case of Ishvara, His birth takes place never because

of. It is because of His omniscience. Because of the knowledge alone, Bhagavan chooses to appear on Earth. This is knowledge and compassion based. Avatara means coming down out of compassion. There is a difference between falling into a well (helpless phenomenon) and going down the well. kaaraNa bheda is the first difference.

SECOND: the nature; svaroopam is different; "svaroopam bheda".

Since jeeva-janma is because of ignorance, jeeva continues to be a samsaari. He is a bound person, born with sorrow. He is helpless, not a master of himself. Janma is samsaaraH.

Since Ishvara avatara is backed by knowledge, it is nitya mukta svaroopam or asamsaari.

Jeeva is samsaari while Avatara is asamsaari.

Another technical difference that Krishna points out is that all the bodies are made up of matter whether it is manushya shariram or avatara shariram. But the scriptures say that there is a difference between the two sharirams. The jeeva shariram is not directly born out of prakrti or maya. Jeeva shariram is indirectly born out of maya. Maya or prakriti gets converted into five elements called pancha bhutani and these five elements get converted into paancha bhoutika shariram. Thus maya does not directly produce the body (jeeva shariram) but it produces through the five elements alone. Jeeva shariram is called paancha bhoutika shariram. From maya to bhutaas to the physical body.

In the case of Ishvara avatara, the maya does not go through the intermediary stage of five elements. Maya directly gets converted into Ishvara avatara shariram. Avatara shariram is called mayika shariram. From maya to the physical body.

So the second difference is in the nature of jeeva shariram and avatara shariram.

Jeeva shariram is bound or samsaari shariram; paancha bhoutika shariram.

Avatara shariram is free or asamsaari shariram; mayika shariram.

This is the svaroopā bheda.

THIRD: the purpose; “karya” or “udheshya bheda”.

When a jeeva is born, it is purely to exhaust the punyam and paapam, which have been acquired in the past, called prarabdha. The prarabdha has to be exhausted. Prarabdha punyam is exhausted through sukham and prarabdha paapam is exhausted through dukham. To experience pleasure and pain, we require the body medium. It is the prarabdha that determines the type of the body for exhausting punya-paapa. The very design of the body is for the purpose of punya-paapa exhaustion. The purpose of jeeva-janma is for the depletion of punyam and paapam.

What is the purpose of an avatara? Avatara is not ignorant, not a samsaari, and does not suffer from the problem of ego. Since there is no ego, there is no question of punyam or paapam. Therefore, Ishvara does not need to take an avatara to exhaust punya-paapa.

Krishna tells an avatara’s purpose in Chapter 4, Verse 8:

दुष्कृत्सु कृष्णार्जुनोऽपि युद्धायैतन्मया धृतम् ।

सुकृत्सु च तस्मै धर्मोऽर्जुन धृत्वाऽपि युद्धयेत् ॥ ४ ॥

To protect the righteous, to annihilate the wicked, and to reestablish the principles of dharma I appear on this earth, age after age.

Ishvara Avatara’s purpose is for the protection of dharma and destruction of adharma by protecting the dhaarmic people and destroying the adhaarmic people. This is why the very nature

of avatara shariram is designed for protecting the people and establishing dharma. The design is determined by the type of protection that is required. Before every avatara comes, there is a portion in the Puranas, where all the noble people pray to the Lord to save them from some rakshasa (Hiranyakashipu, Ravana, etc). Rama Avatara's purpose was destruction of Ravana. The design of the body depends upon the situation.

Ravana's peculiar boon is that he cannot be killed by anyone or anything, except he didn't include humans, out of over-confidence. So, if Ravana had to be destroyed, Bhagavan's avatara had to be human. Hence the design of the body is determined by the purpose of the avatara. When the atrocities were done by Hiranyakashipu, the design for the avatara had to fit the loop holes of his boon. He could not be killed by humans nor animals nor any weapons; and not during the day nor night. The avatara was Narasimha with sharp nails.

In summary: the difference between janma and avatara:

Cause: kaaraNa bheda – ajnaanam vs jnaanam

Nature: svaroopā bheda – samsaari vs asamsaari

Purpose: udheshya bheda – depletion of punya-paapa vs protection of dharma

Krishna tells in this sloka that since avatara is not restricted by ignorance, the avataras know the past, present and future. Krishna says that He knows all his previous incarnations. However, in the case of jeeva-janma, since ignorance limits the jeeva, the jeeva cannot know the past janmas.

How do you know if one is avatara or janma? We really don't have a method of knowing. We accept one as avatara wherever there is scriptural support ie. Rama is an avatara as written in the scriptures. If it is not mentioned in the scriptures, we cannot prove if one is an avatara or janma. It then becomes

our personal belief.

If you consider people with extraordinary powers to be an avatara; then rakshasas will also fall under this. Having extraordinary powers is not proof that this person is an avatara.

Limitations does not disprove avatara. Certain avataras showed limitations. For example, Rama, who is accepted as an avatara, had several natural limitations. It is one's personal belief to accept someone as an avatara even with limitations and not accept someone with extraordinary powers as an avatara.

One consolation is that we do not need to know if one is an avatara or not for our spiritual growth. We need purity of mind! To attain purity of mind, worshipping any form of God is good enough.

The next thing required for spiritual growth is knowledge. This requires a Guru; who need not be an avatara. Even if an avatara has to bless, the blessing can be only by becoming a Guru. Krishna can never give moksha to Arjuna by any method other than by being his Guru.

Swamiji recites from Dhyana Slokas:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ।

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

And

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ।

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

Therefore, for ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय we don't require an avatara. Nor for knowledge. There may or may not be an avatara right now. I may be willing to accept someone as an avatara. The important aspect is to purify, know and be free.

We all uniformly accept Krishna as an avatara. Krishna says, "Arjuna, I am an avatara, different from you. My cause of birth is knowledge, my nature is moksha, my purpose is ∞ ∞ (Chapter 4, Verse 8). This is the topic of avatara given in this portion.

With this background, let's look at Verse 5.

Krishna says, Hey Arjuna, ∞ ∞ | Many janmas have gone by ∞ for you. ∞ I have also taken many sharirams. The number of sharirams does not prove superiority. So what is the difference between you and me? ∞ ∞ ∞ | I continue to be a free person; a ∞ therefore I know all the past sharirams. What about you? ∞ ∞ | You do not know your past sharirams. ∞ 0 Parantapa (Arjuna).

∞ Chapter 4 Sloka 6

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ 4.6
 ∞ unborn ∞ also ∞ being ∞ of imperishable nature ∞ of beings ∞ the Lord ∞ also ∞ being ∞ Nature ∞ My own ∞ governing ∞ come into being ∞ by My own Maya.

Though I am unborn, of imperishable nature, and though I am the Lord of all beings, yet, governing My own Nature, I am born by My own Maya.

Krishna talks about the nature of the avatara.

∞ ∞ | ∞ ∞ | ∞ ∞ |

I know that I am birth less Brahman; I know my nature. I know I am birthless reality and this shariram is a simple ∞ (assumed appearance) I have put on for a certain purpose. I know I am ∞ meaning ∞ ∞ ∞ (no birth). ∞ I am of changeless nature, not subject to decay and death; ∞

मम अकालमृत्यु (devoid of old age and death).

मम means मम अकालमृत्यु and अकालमृत्यु means मम मम अकालमृत्यु | Not only am I free from birth and death, अकालमृत्यु अकालमृत्यु | I am the master of all living beings. I am not a limited entity but I am अकालमृत्यु – I am the master. I have not helplessly come down to this world, I have chosen to come.

How do I manage to come down? अकालमृत्यु अकालमृत्यु – by keeping the prakriti, the matter, the material body under my control I am born. I am surrounded by matter; just as the jeeva also is surrounded by matter. The difference, however, is that I am the master of the matter whereas the jeeva is the slave of the matter (or shariram). Both the avatara (Bhagavan) and the jeeva are surrounded by the body-mind complex (अकालमृत्यु) but Bhagavan is in control of the body-mind complex whereas the jeeva is controlled by the body-mind complex.

मम अकालमृत्यु I take a body. How? अकालमृत्यु with the help of maya tattvam; by producing अकालमृत्यु अकालमृत्यु | This means that I don't require the five elements. Instead from maya I can directly convert into the shariram. This is why Bhagavan does not require the regular process of creation. Even अकालमृत्यु in case of Rama avatara is not the regular process. This is why it is said that the Lord entered into the garbha. In the case of Narasimha avatara, etc., there is no question of a father or mother. From where did the body come? They appear in full-fledged form. How is this possible? It is because of direct conversion of maya, otherwise called अकालमृत्यु | Therefore, Krishna says अकालमृत्यु अकालमृत्यु | And when do I take an avatara? See Sloka 7.

अकालमृत्यु Chapter 4 Sloka 7

मम मम मम अकालमृत्यु अकालमृत्यु अकालमृत्यु
अकालमृत्यु अकालमृत्यु अकालमृत्यु ॥4.7॥

मम मम whenever मम surely अकालमृत्यु of righteousness अकालमृत्यु decline अकालमृत्यु is अकालमृत्यु 0 Bharata अकालमृत्यु rise अकालमृत्यु

of unrighteousness then Myself manifest I.

Whenever there is decline of righteousness, O Arjuna, and rise of unrighteousness, then I manifest Myself.

The purpose of the avatara is explained in this verse.

Whenever dharma declines, values decline. | And |
whenever adharma increases, unrighteousness and corruption increases. | Then, I create myself. I choose whenever it is required.

From a scientific viewpoint, the world can be compared to human body, a cosmic body. Like a body or an organism, it functions in harmony. Any harmonious system, will have its own intrinsic protection device. Our body has built in self protection. Suppose something enters your nostril, you sneeze automatically. The sneeze is involuntary; it is intrinsically built into the system. A natural system has natural protection. This faculty will not be operative all the time (like sneezing). whenever the system's harmony is disturbed, the system itself produces an appropriate remedy. The universe is a cosmic system, the Bhagavan's shariram, and whenever there is a disturbance, the world itself will find an appropriate method of defending the dharma. It will become active whenever it is required. The avatara is like the immunity system of the universe, the cosmic immunity system. Whenever it is required, an avatara will automatically happen.

Bagawat Geeta, Class 54

In the first chapter of Geeta, Vyasa chariyar revealed the human problem of samsara in the form of raga (emotional dependents of external factors), sogaha (grief or sorrow) and moga (delusion or conflict or indiscriminate). When Arjuna had this problem in the battlefield, he tried to solve this problem himself and was not successful and took the action of surrendering to the Lord. Lord Krishna accepted the role of Guru

In the second chapter, Krishna took the approach that the self-knowledge is the only solution. No other solution can solve the problem. And therefore, Krishna tried to give the self-knowledge to Arjuna. Geeta talks about many topics but Gaeta's primary teaching is atma vidhya. In this chapter, Krishna gives the entire range of sadhanas for this knowledge. In this chapter, Krishna taught the two sadhanas: Karma yoga and gyana yoga. Karma yoga is prescribed as a means of mental purity. Krishna makes it clear that karma yoga can only give preparatory knowledge. Gyana yoga involves self-inquiry through the scriptures under the guidance of a competent guru. The second chapter is the summary of Geeta.

The third chapter is elaboration of karma yoga. The fourth and fifth chapters are expansion of gyana yoga.

Krishna takes a small diversion initially to discuss two topics of chapter 4. The two topics are and glorification of Geeta and avatara ragasyam. Krishna wants to emphasize that the teachings of Geeta are vedic teachings and are beginning-less.

Verse 1

The Lord said I imparted this eternal yaga to Lord Sun. Lord Sun taught the same to Manu. Manu taught it to Ikshvaku.

I have given the same teaching in the form of Veda. Krishna says Geeta is the new name for Veda. I revealed this wisdom to Surya Bagawan. This teaching can never go out of date. It is relevant even now in the 20th century.

Surya Bagawan taught this teaching to Manu. Manu taught this to the King Ikshvaku.

Verse 2

Oh Arjuna! The royal sages knew this which was thus traditionally handed down. Due to long passage of time that yaga is lost in this world.

All the raja rishis (kings) knew this teaching. Gradually people started losing interest in this teaching. Therefore, Krishna is revising this teaching in the form of Geeta.

Verse 3

That very same ancient yoga in this which has been taught by Me to you now, because you are My friend and devotee. This indeed is the highest secret.

Veda Purva teaches karma yoga and called karma kandam. Veda Anta teaches gyana yoga and is called gyana kandam. This is the oldest teachings. Krishna chose Arjuna for this teaching, because Arjuna asked for it and because Arjuna is the friend of Krishna.

Self-knowledge is the greatest secret, because what we are searching for is within ourselves. Therefore this wisdom is called uthama ragasiyam.

Verse 4

Arjuna asked: Your birth is later. The birth of Lord Sun is much earlier. How am I to understand this statement of Yours that You have taught Lord Sun in the beginning of the creation?

Vedas are called sruthi because the Rishis heard internally; all other scriptures are called smirhti.

Arjuna says that I can understand that you are teaching me Geeta, but I can't understand how you can also teaching Surya Bagawan at the time of creation, when we both are of the same age. What is the secret of your contrary statement? If you have taught Surya Bagawan, you can't teach me. If you are teaching me, you can't teach Surya Bagawan. As an answer to this question, Krishna will discuss Avataras.

Bagawat Geeta, Class 53 – Summary of Chapter 3

In the second chapter Lord Krishna discussed karma yoga and gyana yoga, focusing more on gyana yoga. Lord Krishna begins second chapter with gyana yoga and concludes the second chapter with sthira pragya. In between the two, he discusses karma yoga and asks Arjuna to do his karma, which is to fight the Mahabaratha war. Lord Krishna glorifies gyana yoga but asks Arjuna to do karma yoga. Arjuna finds this unacceptable.

Introduction Verses 1 to 7

Arjuna asks should I follow Gyna Yoga or Karma Yoga. If you consider Gyana Yoga is better, then why should I fight the war? In answering this question, we should note the following points:

1. There is no choice between karma yoga and gyna yoga. It is apples to orange comparison.
2. Qualifications for gyana yoga can be obtained only through karma yoga. Qualifications are detachment,

purity, maturity. Many of us do not have these qualifications.

3. Moksha can be obtained only through gyana yoga.

Follow karma yoga to obtain qualifications; Use the qualification to acquire gyana yoga; Use Gyana yoga to obtain moksham. All other yogas like japam, parayanam etc. are all part of karma yoga. There are no other yogas other than karma yoga and gyana yoga.

Arjuna's question was wrong; both yogas should be followed. There is a choice regarding marga or life style; one can follow sanyasa asrama or gragasthasram; but both sanhyasi and grahastha should follow karma yoga and gyana yoga.

Which is better? Grahasthasram or sanyasa asram? Krishna is clear that grahasthasram is better for most people.

Karma Yoga Verses 8 to 20

In these verses, Krishna elaborately discusses Karma yoga. Karma: Proper action; Yoga: Proper attitude. So proper action with proper attitude is karma yoga.

Types of actions:

1. Satvic – Promotes the spiritual progress the most; Best action; beneficiaries are more; unselfish
2. Rajesic – Mediocre; promotes some spiritual growth; Beneficiaries are less; confined only to family; selfish actions.
3. Tamasic – Does not promote spiritual growth, but results in degradation of spiritual growth; Harmful action; worst action. I get the benefits, but others get harmed.

Perform panca maha yagya to improve spiritual progress and become satvic. The goal is to become samtvam by accepting all results as a eeswara prasada.

Reasons to follow Karma Yoga, in four different angles:

1. Follow karma yoga as the command of God; follow out of fear of god
2. Follow karma yoga as a sense of gratitude or yagyaha
3. Follow karma yoga as a purifier of kama and soga
4. Follow karma yoga as dharma by which cosmic harmony can be maintained.

Verse 20, second line to verse 29: Duties of a Gyani

Gyani does not require any sadhana (karma yoga, gyana yoga etc.) because he already achieved the goal of gyanam. But as long as he is in the society, he should follow karma yoga as a model to the society. In this verse, Lord Krishna is indirectly advising all elderly people to be role models for rest of the society.

Verses 30 to 35: Summarizes karma yoga; verse 30 is most important;

Krishna gives five-part process of Karma Yoga:

1. Make the Spiritual goal as the primary goal; all other goals are subservient to this goal.
2. Eeswara arpana buddhi: Dedicate all your actions to god so you don't hate any of your duty
3. Eeswara prasadh budhhi: Be prepared for any future situations because future is not under your control. You are not the only one responsible for your success. Accept any result as Eeswara prasadh.
4. Nirmamaha: when success comes don't claim total credit
5. Maintain mental poise/balance

Verses 36 to 43: Obstacles of karma yoga:

Arjuna asks Lord Krishna what are the obstacles of karma yoaga.

Lord Krishna answers Kama/krodha or raga dvesha; materialistic

attractions; Artha kama is important, but dharma moksha is also important. But when artha kama becomes more important than dharma mokhsa, that becomes an obstacle. There are two stages handle this obstacle:

First Stage: handle in relative measures;

1. Dhamaha – Mastery of sense organs; don't let anything enter your mind without control.
2. Shamaha – Discipline of mine and thought pattern. Undisciplined mind has a tendency to get attracted to anything.
3. Vivekaha – Discrimination; understanding that finite plus finite is always finite; insecurity plus insecurity is more insecurity. Understand that I am complete (poornatvam) with myself and I will not be full with any amount of acquisition.

Second Stage: Obsolete solution is to discover fullness and security within myself.