

# 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 Pralayam 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 Amsa consisting of the body-mind-complex with borrowed Chaitanyam. The Ahamkara Amsa 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

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# Bagawat Geeta, Class 67

## Chapter 4

Greetings All,

**Shloka # 36:**

एतन्निष्कामोऽपि सर्वपापान्मुञ्चति  
एतन्निष्कामोऽपि सर्वपापान्मुञ्चति 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:**

एतन्निष्कामोऽपि सर्वपापान्मुञ्चति  
एतन्निष्कामोऽपि सर्वपापान्मुञ्चति 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, Prarabhdha 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:**

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ४.३८ ॥

**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:**

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३९ ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३९ ॥



**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:**

अज्ञानं विश्वासं शक्यं संशयं च त्रयम् ।  
अज्ञानं विश्वासं च संशयं च त्रयम् ॥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:

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

उत्तमोऽस्मिन्निश्चयः सर्वज्ञोऽस्मिन्निश्चयः  
उत्तमोऽस्मिन्निश्चयः सर्वज्ञोऽस्मिन्निश्चयः 4.42

**Therefore, O 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, O 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

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# Saddarshanam, Class 22

Greetings All,

**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.**

Continuing his teaching, Swami Paramarthananda said,

in this shloka Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi points out what the attitude of a Vedantic student towards Sidhi or miraculous powers should be. These Sidhi's are described in Puranas as well as in Yoga Shastras. The Ashta maha Sidhi's are:

1. Anima: To become small or reducing one's body even to the size of an atom.
2. Mahima: To become large or expanding one's body to an infinitely large size.
3. Laghima: To become light in weight or becoming almost weightless.
4. Garima: Size being same increase in weight or becoming infinitely heavy.
5. Prapthi: Capacity to reach any place at will by thought or having unrestricted access to all places.
6. Prakamyā: Capacity to perform anything at will or materialization or realizing whatever one desires.
7. Ishtwa: Being with God or being over nature or

possessing absolute lordship.

8. Vastva: Controlling others including their minds or the power to subjugate all.

In addition to above many smaller Sidhi's also are described in shastras. Means of attaining these Sidhis are also described. Thus: Gems, Mantras, Aushadha (herbs) and Yoga Chakras will all get us Sidhis. Poorvajanma, past life, also can give us Sidhis. Even the Bhagavathpurana has described many Sidhis.

Describing the attitude a Vedantic student should take to Sidhi, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi suggests the following:

1. Sidhis do exist. They are in Shastra Pramanam.
2. Sidhis have nothing to do with spirituality. Spiritual wisdom is possible without Sidhis. Acquisition of Sidhis does not necessarily get you spiritual knowledge. Many Rakshasas were Sidhas who observed it in an Adharmic manner.
3. All Sidhis come under Karma and Upasana phalam. So, they fall under Maya or Samsara.
4. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi points out if a person does not understand the limitation of Sidhis he will get distracted in spiritual pursuit. He will get attracted to Sidhis and Sidhas more than Gyanam. Sidhis cannot give one, Self- Knowledge. Bhagawan says don't value conventional Sidhis. He suggests ignoring them. We need to understand that the greatest Sidhi is Self-Knowledge. All conventional Sidhis will keep a person in Samsara. Self -Knowledge alone will take him out of Samsara.

In Sidhi, jealousy, quarrel etc., occur. All Sidhis will keep one in limitation or in Samsara. Remember, a Gyani is a true Sidha and Gyanam is the real Sidhi.

Explaining the shloka, Swamiji said, Atma Gyanam alone is a real miracle. Atma Gyanam will liberate you. All other Sidhis

do not matter. They are like a dream and are Mithya. Only Gyanam is required. All other Sidhis indicate ignorance. Shankaracharya's greatness is often cited more because of his Sidhi's than his knowledge. So too with Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi; People say he underwent surgery without any anesthesia. The greatness of Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi is that he encouraged Atma Vichara.

Dream appears real during the dream. Upon waking the dream disappears. So too with conventional Sidhis, every time one uses a Sidhi, it depletes ones Tapas.

With Self -Knowledge there is no depletion or decrease. Giving knowledge to others does not deplete one's Gyanam.

Patanjali's yogasutra considers Sidhis as obstacles to moksha. The word Atma Nishta means Atma Gyanam Nishta or non-forgetfulness of Atma Gyanam. Sahaj Samadhi means Atma Nishta. Such a person will not fall under the spell of Maya or ignorance.

idya (wealth) is the only thing that increases in a person by giving knowledge. So, the right attitude is not to respect Sidhis.

### **Shloka # 38:**

**In the state of thinking that the body is the Self, the contemplation of "He am I" is helpful to the search of the Supreme. In the accomplishment of the oneness of one's Self, that (He am I) contemplation is, again, without purpose, just as, to a man, the knowledge of his manhood is of no help.**

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi warns Vedantic students not to enter Vedantic study mechanically. Original purpose of Vedanta is to be free one of all dependencies.

A student can get addicted to Vedantic study and it can become bondage. Such a student is likely to get upset if he sees any

obstacle to the study.

While initially the student has to bond with the Guru and be attached to Shastra and God, he should grow with knowledge and at some point drop all such attachments.

In the initial stages this Soham Vichara is essential and beneficial. This Vichara leads to Paramatma and Jivatma Aikyam. It is a means of acquiring knowledge. It is useful until one reaches the stage where one (Sadhaka) reaches the Sadhyam "Aham Brahma Asmi". So long as you are a finite Jivatma requiring a transformation (struggling to become someone else, in mind), till then you are in the present "I" working towards a future "I". Bhagwan says so long as this condition exists it is a misconception about your Self. Satisfaction is not connected with completion of any project. The moment you connect it to a project it becomes Samsara. Therefore, Vedantic study should not become another project. As long as you look at yourself as an ego (connecting to completion of a project) you have to study Vedanta. One has to keep checking if I am in an ego state or not. "I am satisfied" in spite of an incomplete project, this is Gyanam.

I never connect project to its completion. It is ego that converts everything into a project. This postponement of fulfillment is Samsara. Once you reach Gyanam drop the Vedanta Vichara. You can enjoy the classes as a non-binding desire.

Pramanam is irrelevant after Gyanam. A person need not perform the Japa " I am human". A fact is not meant for Japa. If I know "I am Brahman" and it is a fact for me, then I do not have to perform Mahavakya Japam anymore. Mahavakya needs to be understood and once you get the knowledge, you should drop it.

Therefore for a wise person (Gyani) "Aham Brahma Asmi" japa is not required.

**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.

This is another important shloka. Moksha is not an external event occurring at Anatma level. Don't look for any transformation in the outside world. If you practice Yoga, you may acquire a glow in your body. This, however, has nothing to do with spirituality. Spirituality will not give you a halo. Gyanam has nothing to do with changing the world, body or sensory perceptions. The change occurs only in our intellect and in understanding that the World, God and "I" are one.

### **Take Away:**

1. Gyanam has nothing to do with changing the world, body or sensory perceptions.
2. In Gyanam, the change occurs only in our intellect and in understanding that the World, God and "I" are one.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

### **Foot Note:**

Sidhi's:

## **Ten secondary siddhis**

In the *Bhagavata Purana*, Krishna describes the ten secondary siddhis:

- *anūrmimattvam*: Being undisturbed by hunger, thirst, and other bodily appetites
- *dūraśravaṇa*: Hearing things far away
- *dūradarśanam*: Seeing things far away
- *manojavah*: Moving the body wherever thought goes (teleportation/astral projection)

- *kāmarūpam*: Assuming any form desired
- *parakāya praveśanam*: Entering the bodies of others
- *svachanda mṛtyuh*: Dying when one desires
- *devānām saha krīḍā anudarśanam*: Witnessing and participating in the pastimes of the gods
- *yathā saṅkalpa saṁsiddhiḥ*: Perfect accomplishment of one's determination
- *ājñāpratihatā gatiḥ*: Orders or commands being unimpeded<sup>l</sup>

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# Bagawat Geeta Class 66, Chapter 4

Greetings All,

**Shloka # 34:**

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
 ज्ञानं प्राप्नुयान्मनुष्यो यः शुक्रेण शिष्यतः ॥४.३४॥

**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



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 ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ श्रीकृष्णाय नमः ॥ 1.36 ॥

**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, Shastra’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

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# Bagawat Geeta, Chapter 4, Class 65

Greetings All,

**Shloka # 30:**

यत्किञ्चिन्नियम्येत् प्राणान् प्राणैश्चिन्मया  
यत्किञ्चिन्नियम्येत् प्राणान् प्राणैश्चिन्मया 4.30

**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:

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? 4.31

**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:**

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ४.३२ ॥  
 ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ४.३२ ॥

**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:**

श्रुतिरहितमज्ञानं शून्यं चन्द्रमविद्युत्समम् ।  
 ज्ञानं त्वं श्रेष्ठं तस्यै मृत्योर्नाममृत्युर्नाम ॥4.33॥

**The sacrifice of knowledge, 0 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:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३४ ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३४ ॥ 4.34 ॥

**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

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## **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

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## **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

finities. 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”.

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## Bagawat Geeta, Chapter 4, Class 64

Greetings All,

**Shloka # 27:**

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ४.२७ ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ४.२७ ॥

**Yet others sacrifice all sense-activities and all activities of vital breaths in the fire of self-restraint, kindled by knowledge.**

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, with the 24th shloka Sri Krishna concluded Gyana Yoga. In shlokas 25 through 34 he now talks about the glory of Self Knowledge. In these shlokas he mentions twelve spiritual practices. One of them is also Gyana Yoga. He calls all of them Yagnahas. All of them involve worship of the Lord. He says all of them are great but Gyana yoga is the greatest of them all. All of them prepare the mind but only Gyana can give liberation.

Therefore all the eleven sadhanas are validated or made fruitful only when all of them culminate in Gyanam. Thus,

Gyanam is called sakshat mokshakaranam and all

other sadhanas are called parampara mokshakaranam. They can only indirectly help; Gyanam alone can help directly.

For preparation purposes, we can take any one of the eleven, however, there is no choice with respect to Gyana Yoga. There are many paths for Chitta shuddhi but only one for Gyanam. Hence it is considered the greatest one of all. Following is the essence of Shlokas 25-34.

Shlokas 25-27:

1. **Gyana Yagna:** Self Knowledge is also a form of Yagna.
2. **Deva Yagna:** is the ritualistic worship of various devatha
3. **Vishaya Bhoga Yagna:** considers every experience as worship. Thus, the entire world consisting of shabda, sparsha, rupa, rasa and gandha are all taken as flowers. Thus music is considered a flower. A beautiful picture is a flower; a tasty object is a flower. All these flowers are offered to the Lord, who is inside us in the form of Atma Chaitanyam.
4. **Indriya Samyama Yagna:** This is sense control. Practice of maunam is such a Sadhana. One who masters the tongue not only controls speech he also controls his eating as well.
5. **Kshama Yagna:** It is thought discipline. Quantity, quality and direction of thought have to be controlled. It is a tough discipline, because it requires monitoring the mind throughout the day.

Seven more Yagnas are covered in following shlokas.

**Shloka # 28:**

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**Other ascetics, subject to severe disciplines, sacrifice their material possessions, their penances, spiritual exercises, prescribed lessons, and knowledge.**

In this Shloka five spiritual disciplines are discussed.

**6. Dravya Yagna:** It also means Dana Yagna. Danam can include: money, material, sharing knowledge, sharing time and sharing good will.

It is an important Yagna. In creation everything is in a flow. A river receives water and delivers to the ocean; Ocean delivers it to cloud and cloud delivers back to the river. Everything is cyclic. I too should receive as well as give. What I give should be proportionate to what I receive. If one does not follow this principle, the divide between rich and poor increases. Communism believes in forcible giving. Vedanta believes we should give out of our wisdom and share. Yagna, Dana and Tapaha are emphasized. Tapaha means moderation in everything. In olden days when one got more, one performed a big ritual and the Danam became a part of the ritual. This was done without any arrogance.

The scope and magnitude of dakshina danam can be understood when we consider the following: anna danam, vastra danam; chappal danam, kodai (umbrella) danam; vadi (stick) danam; pusthaka danam; kshetra (land) danam; svarna danam; and even kanyaka danam as a part of marriage ceremony.

**7. Tapaha:** Means the mastery of sense organs. It is willful Self-denial to establish my mastery over my own organs. Tapaha should not be enforced. Fasting is a spiritual practice while starving is not. Whatever I regularly use, I say, I will not use. Shiva rathri vratam, Upavasa are some examples. Saying no to coffee, to food, daily newspaper etc. are all examples of Tapaha. For some time, periodically, we should try to say no to all such things.



8. **Yoga Yagnaha:** This is Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali to integrate one's personality. We have five layers of personality and we have studied, annamaya, pranamaya, manomaya, vigyanamaya and anandamaya koshas.

Annamaya is disciplined by yogasanas; so that I can sit in a posture for an hour without disturbance. It is a yogah.

For pranamaya disciple, we have pranayama.

For manomaya disciple, we have meditation.

For vigyanamaya discipline, we have study.

All five koshas are supposed to work together. Like instruments in a music concert all koshas should work together in harmony to produce anandamaya or bliss in us.

9. **Svadhyaaya Yagnaha:** is parayanam of the scriptures. It includes: learning to chant; memorizing and regularly chanting.

Learning to chant teaches akshara shuddhi. After that memorizing the chapter helps, as you can now understand the chapter holistically when the teacher teaches. Swamiji says he summarizes each chapter at the end. In ancient times this was not a practice as the student would be absorbing the whole chapter as he would have it in memory.

To help one memorize, scriptures were often in sutra or shloka forms.

Sutras are very brief abbreviated capsule statement.

Shlokas are metrical or musical forms such as in Gita.

Both were meant for memorizing. Therefore, they never used a printed version of the book. Students had to memorize everything. The idea was while young, one memorized the shlokas. As one grew older the desire to know more about the

shlokas arose and they were readily available in our minds. All scriptures are after all associated with Gods and Rishis.

10. **Gyana Yagna:** is study of the meaning of the scriptures. It is enquiry and analysis. Therefore during Svadhyaya it is called shabda grahanam; Gyana yagna stage is called artha grahanam. In the first one, Svadhyaya, you learn the words, in the second one, Gyanam, you learn the meaning. And that is why they start the svadhyaya at an early age and they do the veda adhyayanam in the 5th year, 6th year, 7th year, etc. Since it is a young mind, it will easily register, and thus can cover the entire vedas within 15 years.

In shloka # 25 Deva and Gyana Yagna were mentioned. In shloka # 28 again Gyana Yagna is mentioned. The Gyana Yagna here means it is related to analysis of scriptures. So tarka, mimamsa and vyakarana, all these come under Gyana yajna. Five secondary disciplines of the Yagna are also mentioned. They are: Draya yagyaha, tapo yagyaha, yoga yagyaha, svadhyaya yagyaha, and Gyana yagyaha. In this shloka Dravya Yagyaha means Sadhakas who perform Dravya Yagya. Tapo Yagyaha means one who performs Tapas and so on. These sadhakas are also called Yathi or Yathayaha or Sanyasi. From this comes the name Yathiraja college. Yathi means a committed spiritual seeker. He may even be a Grihasta. They are people of firm resolve. Will power is very important in spirituality.

**Shloka # 29:**

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १ ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १ ॥ 4.29 ॥

**Some intent on breath-control, blocking the movement of the in-breath and out-breath, sacrifice the in-breath in the out breath and, similarly, sacrifice the out-breath in the in-breath.**

11: **Pranayama:**

Here Sri Krishna discusses Pranayama as a useful spiritual discipline.

When we study the different layers of our personality, we find annamaya is the grossest layer, the physical body. The next interior layer is pranamaya, the energy sheath. Prana stands for the vital force, our energy. The next one is the manomaya, the mental personality; emotional or psychological personality .

Pranamaya comes in between annamaya and manomaya and if a person disciplines the pranic personality, then he will influence both annamaya as well as manomaya. When prana is disciplined, physical health will improve as will mental health.

Pranayama practice is of two types.

1. As an exercise to improve health or a secular discipline.
2. Vedas want to make it part of religious discipline.

Thus, we have the chant Om Bhoohu, Om Bhuvaha etc. This is garbha pranayama. It purifies the mind.

Pranayama is a very big discipline. There are advanced courses offering Pranayama for obtaining material success. Kundalini yoga is a part of this. Kundalini is Pranic energy. It is really about tapping into our potential energy in any form. Thus, walking daily is a manifestation of this power. Even memory is a power that needs to be exercised. Power in a waterfall is the electricity and a manifestation of Kundalini Shakti.

These are all, however, manifestations of Anatma. Kundalini has no connection to Gyanam.

Vedanta is not interested in materialistic powers. From Vedanta's perspective, Pranayama can be used for Chitta

Shuddi. There are three types of Pranayama. They are:

1. Puraka: Inhalation. Here exhalation is offered as the sacrifice.
2. Rachaka: Exhalation. Inhalation is offered as the sacrifice.
3. Kumbhaka: Neither inhale nor exhale. Antara Kumbhaka, retain after inhaling. Bahya Kumbhaka, is retaining after exhaling.

All these are Yagnahas. Kumbhakaha, where breath is stopped is good for a restless mind. It can, however, only give relative quietude. Only knowledge can bring absolute quietude.

### Shloka # 30:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ४.३० ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ४.३० ॥

**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.**

### 12.Ahara Niyama:

So 11 yagnahas are over; now comes the 12th and last one. The last one is known as Ahara Niyama. It is discussed in chapter 6 again. Here one has to control quantity and quality of our intakes.

There should be a fixed time for eating. Over eating should be avoided. One should get rid of Tamasic foods such as meat and alcohol. When food discipline is missing our pranas become thick and undisciplined.

Ahara niyama converts sick prana to healthy ones. Digestion and breathing are improved. They destroy all internal impurities.

With Best Wishes,

## Saddharshanam, Class 19

Greetings All,

**Shloka # 31:**

**Diving in silence by the mind, inquiring about one's root alone is true Self-inquiry. "This I am" and "This I not my nature" these thoughts are a limb of true inquiry.**

Continuing his teaching, Swami Paramarthananda said, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi, after dealing with the nature of Ahamkara as a mythical entity, one created from borrowed attributes of Atma and Anatma, now points out that to achieve moksha Ahamkara has to be eliminated.

Ahamkara leads you to a false world. We have to eliminate this false world. We can eliminate it only by an enquiry into Atma. Enquiry into and discovery of Atma is the only solution. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi calls it Ahamkara Moola Vichara.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi did not give details of how to perform this Vichara. For this we have to go Vedanta. Independent (ignorant) mind cannot perform this Self Enquiry. When an ignorant person asks the "Who am I?" it should be answered by a wise person. Therefore, mind (of the ignorant) comes up with its own misconceptions. It can reach silence but it cannot go beyond the silence. This requires an external support. Just as a microscope can help us see small objects and a telescope see far away objects, we need an external support that can lead us to this knowledge. Therefore, Shankaracharya says mind has to make the enquiry, but it has

to be supported by:

- Shastra
- Acharya
- Upadesha and
- Application of our mind

Since this application is not mentioned in the Saddarshanam it has created a misconception among some people. They feel just asking the question “who am I?” will lead to Gyanam.

Discussing the third line of the shoka Swamiji says Vedanta Vichara is divided into three segments. They are:

1. Jivatma Vichara or Tvam Pada Vichara. This can also be compared to the truth of the wave in the water-ocean analogy.
2. Paramatma Vichara or Tatpada Vichara. This is Vichara at macrocosm level or on God. This has also been compared to the truth of the Ocean.
3. Focusing on the truth that nature of individual and of the total are one and the same. It is also known as Aikya Vichara or Adipada Vichara. Here one becomes aware of the incidental wave, the incidental ocean and the essential water. Essence of both Jivatma and Paramatma is the Atma. Jiva and Param are only incidental nama and roopa's, in reality there is only one Atma.

Eliminating the Pancha koshas where one sees every one of them as incidental attributes is performing the Tvampada Vichara. The body is incidental. It is like a worn out cloth that gets discarded after some time. Similarly, this body is also discarded after some time. This is known as Panchkosha viveka.

After negating all objects we come to a state of blankness. Here Guru and Shastra will point out that the blankness or silence is the objectless consciousness. This silence is my nature. I have to own up to it.

This silence cannot be objectified. A lot of Vedanta has been captured in line # 3 of this shloka. This knowledge of the essential nature of the individual is part of the Vichara. If a person performs only step # 1, Jivatma Vichara, he will conclude Atma is the essential nature. He will also conclude wrongly, that each person has an essential Atma or it leads to the conclusion of many Atma's. This is the theory of Sankhya philosophy. Therefore steps # 2 and # 3 are essential.

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.**

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says by performing this Vichara successfully Ahamkara will be resolved. Dream is unreal while Waker is real. I wake upto "I" the Waker reality. Once I wake up, the dream will resolve into the waker. The source or the ground of this resolution is the Adhishtanam Atma. From ignorant (unknown) Atma Ahamkara rises and it resolves in the Known Atma. Citing another example, unknown rope resolves in known rope. This is the conversion of unknown rope to known rope. Similarly, unknown waker converts into known waker. Therefore the purpose of Vichara is to convert the unknown "I" to known "I". Through this Vichara Ahamkara falls and it is destroyed. There are many methods by which Ahamkara can be temporarily destroyed, but in all of them Ahamkara keeps coming back. Thus, in both yoga Samadhi (with vedantic knowledge) and andha Samadhi (without vedantic knowledge) extreme bliss can be experienced. However, once the Samadhi ends, Ahamkara rises again, since the ignorance has not yet gone. Vedanta says, Samadhi wont solve the problem. Even drugs can lead you to Samadhi experience. Swami Dayanada used to call them Bhang Sadhus. What is required is the knowledge that can falsify Ahamkara.

After this knowledge the Gyani will still use the word Aham, but here it means Swaroop Atma and not Ahamkara. He realizes Aham Atma Asmi. **He realizes I am not the body rather I am the atma into which the whole world is born.**

Gyani looks at every galaxy as a bubble, which is born in him. He comes to the realization that "I am atma in all avasthas". The small "I" merges into the big "I". Atma is not a particular product. Consciousness is present in all worldly experiences. The glory of the new "I" is that it is free from Ahamkara. Ahamkara is limited, has a name and is a Samsari. The new "I" is not limited and has no name attached to it and it is Param Poornam. Even the word subject is not used anymore for Atma. Initially Atma is called subject. Later you have to drop the subject as well. No word can describe it. It is complete without limitations. Poornam is not another adjective. It means absence of any attribute. Thus, it is like the word bald that means no hair. So, Atma is nirguna.

After gaining this knowledge, I am Atma, when we come to transactions, when you are asked where is your father; you have to use Ahamkara Vesham (disguise). This is required for decent Vyavahara. Always remember it is a Vesham. Remember I am not the Vesham. I am Atma.

Word meanings from above shlokas:

Charcha, Gaveshanam and Chayanam all mean Vichara. Etat means the five koshas.

Iti Prama: This knowledge of the essential nature. Ahanta: Ahamkara.

Hridantara: Adhishtana Atma.

Pari Bhugna: Falling head down.

Aham is used to mean Gyani not Ahamkara.

Anyat means the new I.



Prakrishtam: means the main.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

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## Saddharshanam, Class 18

Greetings All,

Shloka # 29:

**That is true Being, where the ego does not rise. That again will not perish without a search for its place of emergence. If that does not perish, can there be the Being in the form of oneness with one's self.**

Continuing his teaching, Swami Paramarthananda said, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi talked about Ahamkara in Shloka's #23 through #25. In shloka # 26 he points out that Ahamkara is the basis of Samsara. It is finite and will end. He also points out that it is also a karta and a bhokta. Therefore moksha is possible only if Ahamkara is eliminated. So, we must find a way to eliminate it. Shlokas 27-29 are describing the methods of elimination of Ahamkara. The methods include suppression, escapism and use of palliative. In sleep, Ahamkara is temporarily resolved. Sense pleasures take us to Ananada Maya Kosha. Music, food etc. belong to this Kosha. During such experiences too we go to a state of Nirvikalpa Avastha. Temporary forgetfulness occurs, one merges into the music and Ahamkara is resolved. In all experiences of pleasure Ahamkara

is resolved. This is known as Ahamkara Laya. The yogic method of nirvikalpa samadhi is also an Ahamkara Laya. However, once you leave the pleasure, Ahamkara roars back. Nirvikalpa Samadhi, however, does remove Ahamkara permanently as such it also does not take you to moksha. Even after a maha-pralaya the old Ahamkara comes back. Only a permanent destruction of Ahamkara leads to moksha. Atma Agyanam is the root cause of Ahamkara. Atma Gyanam is the solution as it leads to understanding that Ahamkara is Mithya. It is like the destruction of a pot by a hammer or by throwing it down or through wisdom where one realizes that there is no such thing called pot and that only the clay exists. Realization dawns that other than Atma nothing else exists. This destroys Ahamkara. I may use the pot functionally but I also am aware that it is really clay. Only understanding the Adishtanam can falsify the pot. This falsification is called Ahamkara Nasha. Once Agyanam is eliminated it does not comeback. A Jivan Mukta knows Ahamkara is mithya or rather that it is a vyavaharika Satyam.

In the shloka Aham means "The I" and not just I. Citing an example, a devotee asked a sage "when will I be immortal"? The sage replied, "when the I dies".

Udayastan: means Atma Vichara.

Shlokas # 27-31 are all about Atma Vichara as a means of Ahamkara Nishta.

### **Shloka # 30:**

**As one dives in a well of deep waters, in the same way having controlled the breath and speech, with an extremely sharp intellect, having dived inside, inquiring, one gets to the root of one's ego.**

People ask if Self-enquiry is easy or difficult. Some say it is difficult. Others say Nama Smaranam is easier in kaliyuga. Some say Vichara is a straight and easy path. So is it

difficult or easy? Katho Upanishad says it is difficult like walking on a razor's edge. Sri Krishna says, however, it is very easy.

Swamiji says when the question asked is not right one, the answer also cannot be right. For whom is it easy or difficult? It depends on the person making the enquiry. For a prepared person it is easy. For an unprepared person it is not even appealing. For him Bhakti may be more appealing.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says first prepare and then enter the Vichara. Many people get into Vichara without preparation. Sadhana Chatushtaya Sampathihi is required for such Vichara. All four qualifications are required. An integrated personality that can withdraw from Samsara should be in place. One should be mentally become a Sanyasi. You have to die to your role. This is called Indriya Nigraha or sensory withdrawal. In this state one should enquire. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi cites an example of the rope of a village well. Once it snaps a man has to go down deep into the well to bring it out. Like a well diver both qualities of Prana Nirodha (pranayama) and Vang Nirodha (control on mouth) are required. Fourth chapter of Gita also talks of Pranayama to make one's mind quiet. One also has to control the mouth, that is, eating and speaking. These two Sadhanas are indicated through the well driver analogy. After performing these two Sadhanas one should perform Atma Vichara. He says one should not go into Vichara without preparation. Even Patanjali talks of seven yogas to be practiced before Atma Vichara.

The Vicahra should be performed with a refined intellect. This involves Sravanam, mananam and nidhidhyasanam. Transcending and suppressing the intellect will not help. Only by refining intellect can one enquire. Through this enquiry one should know the mithya ahamkara's adishtanam or the Atma.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi does not discuss the process of Atma Vichara. He is silent on this topic. This has resulted in the

creation of a cult who practice "Who am I" meditation.

In the Gita, Sri Krishna tells us how to perform the enquiry. He tells us one has to go to a qualified Guru. The traditional Guru will tell you to follow Sravanam, Mananam and Nidhidhyasanam. Sri Krishna is doing exactly that with Arjuna; he is teaching him.

Never take a prodigy as a model. Saints like Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi probably had their learning in a previous birth. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi has not mentioned or negated the Guru Shashtra Upadesha. This is the difference between tradition and cult.

### **Shloka # 31:**

**Diving in silence by the mind, inquiring about one's root alone is true Self inquiry. "This I am" and "This I not my nature" these thoughts are a limb of true inquiry.**

Here again Atma Vichara is discussed. Here yet another Sadhana is also discussed. Mano-Nirodha or Kshama is discussed. Mauna is of two kinds. One Mauna is to be without speech. The other mauna is to be without the chatter of the mind. Mauna means fully focused on the words of the teacher. The word Majjam in shloka means immersed in. Citing Janaka Maharaja's story, Janaka and others were listening to the teacher, when a fire broke out. All others ran out except Janaka, who was focused on the words of the teacher. With such a silent mind one should enter a dialogue with the Guru on Atma Vichara or Ahamkara moola Vichara. This enquiry has two parts to it. They are:

- Seeing what I am not.
- Seeing what I am.

Picking every object and negating it by Neti or saying " I am not this or that".

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy