

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

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

Ten Commandments – Yamas, Niyamas and ways to Incorporate them in daily life

Continuing the discussion from last week on the topic of how to put in practice the teachings of Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi and the Bhagawad Gita, Dr. Katta presented an excerpt of an audio recording of Swamiji delivered on New Year 2,000. After searching I found the text of this lecture that I have copied for your benefit. For those of you who like to listen, Ravi has posted Swamiji's recording in Advaidam website. For those who like to read, this information is presented below. Please try to practice these teachings.

Ten Commandments of Hinduism and how to follow them:

New Year: 2000 – 10 commandments

Sadhaks or spiritual seekers attend lectures, read books, and use other means such as participation in study groups to acquire spiritual knowledge. After some time, a stage is reached when many aspirants feel they have studied a lot and have a reasonably good understanding of the scriptures but are not able to implement the knowledge gained. They have the "theory" but are unable to put it to "practice". *Sadhaks* who face this problem can take up the following programme. Even others who do not have this problem can use this programme to reinforce the scriptural teaching.

This programme is a one-year project that can be renewed every year. The programme can be practiced as it is or modified to

suit the needs or convenience of the individual. Since the project consists of 12 components with each component taking a month, the New Year is a good time to start this programme. This programme is essentially the practice of “ten commandments” of Hinduism – fivefold abstention (called ‘*yama*’) and fivefold discipline (‘*niyama*’). These are the do’s and don’ts of Hinduism.

The programme is presented in two parts. First, the *yamas* (don’ts) and *niyamas* (do’s) are defined and explained from the standpoint of practicing them. Of the two groups, our scriptures consider *yamas* to be more important than the *niyamas* and so the former is discussed first. Secondly, a method of implementation of the *yamas* and *niyamas* is presented.

The five *yamas* are *ahimsa*, *satyam*, *asteyam*, *brahmacharyam*, and *aparigraha*.

1) *Ahimsa* (non-violence) is the avoidance of violence and injury. *Ahimsa* has several aspects. The grossest form of *Himsa* is physical violence. Physical violence is not confined to beating people but includes actions such as throwing or banging things. When we begin practice on this programme, we must first pay attention to physical violence. If we feel we are already free from the weakness, we can concentrate on verbal violence – shouting or using abusive or indecent language.

2) *Satyam* (truthfulness) is primarily a verbal discipline. We maintain harmony between knowledge, motives, and words. Our words must not hide our knowledge or motives. There must be harmony between thought and word. *Satyam* is a positive attribute and yet it is listed as a *yama*. So we have to redefine *satyam* as something to be given; that is the avoidance of a *satyam*. We must emphasize more on eschewing a *satyam*, by not telling lies or speaking untruths.

3) *Asteyam* (non-stealing) literally means non-stealing. We may wonder whether this value is required for us because we are not thieves. *Steyam* is not just breaking into a house and stealing. Any unfair transaction through which we derive some benefit is *steyam*. Not paying a person his due is a form of stealing because we keep what legitimately belongs to another person.

4) *Brahmacharyam* (chastity) means having the right attitude towards members of the opposite sex. Men must have a decent and appropriate attitude towards women and similarly women must have a decent and appropriate attitude towards men. Like *satyam*, *brahmacharyam* is a positive characteristic and yet finds a place among the *yamas*. So we must understand *brahmacharyam* as giving up all indecent and inappropriate attitudes towards the opposite sex.

5) *Aparigraha* (non-possessiveness) is the fifth *yama*. *Parigraha* means possession. *Aparigraha* is literally non-possession and must be understood as leading a simple life. There are two aspects to *aparigraha* – owning less and having the right attitude towards what little we own. We give up luxury, pomp, and show. We draw a line and limit our possessions to what is necessary. A simple living is suitable for high thinking.

We should not develop possessiveness towards the limited possessions we have. This is even more important than owning less. We should remind ourselves that what we have belongs to the Lord and is given to us temporarily for us to grow. We use our possessions with gratitude to the Lord who claim them at any time giving advance notice or not.

The five *niyamas* are *saucham*, *santosham*, *tapas*, *swadhyaya*, and *Ishwara pranidhanam*.

6) *Sacuham* (purity) means cleanliness or purity. We must first focus on gross or physical purity and later concentrate

on subtle or inner purity. *Saucham* can be understood as keeping ourselves and everything around us clean. This includes our body, clothes, possessions and house. *Saucham* is not only cleanliness but also orderliness. Our house may be very clean but due to disorderliness we may have to search for anything and everything. A good maxim to follow is 'a place for everything and everything in its place.'

7) *Santosha* (contentment) means contentment or satisfaction. *Santosha* has to be developed at two levels because life is twofold pursuit – earning and owning. Initially we aspire to earn a lot of wealth and also own many possessions. The first stage of contentment is at the level of owning. We are satisfied with our possessions and stop earning for more. Earning continues but spending decreases. Such a person produces more, consumes less and creates wealth for the community, society and nation and is called a karma yogi.

The second stage of contentment focuses on earning. We stop craving for more and more. Such a person is *jnana* yogi. Contentment at both levels of earning and owning is called *santosha* or *trupti* and should be practiced as a *niyama* meaning with a positive attitude. We think of what we have rather than what we do not have and give up beggarliness of the mind. We tell our mind that we have plenty. This is the principle of abundance.

A contented person will readily share his wealth with others. Without *santosha*, *dhanam* (charity) cannot take place. Contentment is a prerequisite for a charitable disposition.

8) *Tapas* (austerity) means austerity and like *ahimsa* and *santosha* has many dimensions. The grossest form of *tapas* pertains to physical activity. Activity is important not only from the religious and spiritual angle but also from the aspect of health. In the olden days the very lifestyle ensured that people were physically fit. Today we can consider some form of exercise. An ideal exercise is the *surya namaskar*. It

is common to hear people say that they do not have time for exercise. Those who cannot spare a few minutes a day for maintaining their health today may have to spend many months later for recovering (lost) health due to sickness.

9) *Swadhyaya* (spiritual study) is the study of our scriptures and is a very important commandment. Many years ago *swadhyaya* was done by every person. It was a daily ritual known as *Brahma yagna*. Today people do not give much importance to spiritual study. May think it is for intellectuals and those who want to take to monastic life. At the minimum we must study a few verses of the *Bhagavad Gita* everyday and reflect upon the teaching.

10) *Ishwara Pranidhanam* (surrender to God) is looking upon every experience in our lives, favourable or unfavourable, as God's will because every experience we undergo is the result of our past actions. This is called *karma phallam* and can be pleasure or pain. Behind every *karma phallam* is the law of karma and behind the law of karma is the Lord. The Lord is invisible, the law of karma is invisible but when the Lord and the law of karma function, the result is a tangible experience. So we accept every experience without resistance. And the mind is free of negative emotions and thoughts. This acceptance is called *Ishwara Pranidhanam* or *sarangati*. An inability or unwillingness to do so will produce unhealthy thoughts in the mind and lead to bitterness, anger, frustration, hatred, etc.

The ten *yamas* and *niyamas* should be practiced by all the *sadhaks*. We have no choice in the matter. Without these attributes, the study of *Vedanta* will neither be meaningful nor beneficial.

How can a *sadhak* practice the ten commandments? Aspirants may consider the following method of implementation that is designed as a one-year project. Every month we should focus on one commandment beginning with the first and proceed in order.

Each commandment is important and should be given attention. Practicing the *yamas* and *niyamas* can be made effective by following a five-fold strategy: *sankalpa*, *avadhanam*, *samyama*, *simha-avalokanam*, and *vicara*.

1) *Sankalpa* (resolve) means making a resolve every day. We begin the day with a resolve that we will practice the commandment chosen for the month. During the “*ahimsa*” month; we will resolve firmly: Today I will practice *ahimsa*. I will not shout at my family members, subordinates etc. We must maintain a notebook and soon after getting up we must write, ‘*I will practice ahimsa today*’ 24 times. We should write with a full heart, sincerity, and commitment.

2) *Avadhanam* (precaution) is especially important. The scriptures say that for a spiritual seeker, negligence is destruction. Many railway accidents occur due to negligence of simple precautionary measures. Precaution is within our capacity. We must be alert and avoid the contributory factors that make us violate the commandment. This applies even to our health. Maintaining health requires adherence to a few simple rules neglecting which we may have to face the consequences for a life time.

3) *Samyama* (restraint) comes into play when *avadhanam* fails. Violations (of the commandments) will occur, especially in the initial stages and we display the negative behavior we have been trying to avoid. The moment we realize we are using abusive language, we must strive to control ourselves. We practice restraint before the situation gets out of hand.

4) *Simha-avalokanam* (introspection) is the fourth strategy and should be done every day. At the end of the day, we look at our behaviours and determine to what extent we fulfilled our resolve to follow the chosen commandment. For every violation we must take out our notebook and write, ‘*on sri gurubhyo namah*’ 24 times. There are three benefits in doing so. First, it serves as a *prayaschitham* or repentance

for violating the commandment. Secondly, we invoke the grace of the guru. Guru includes god because HE is the *adiguru*; the first guru is Bhagavan. Thirdly, by the grace of the guru, the circumstances or occasions that make us violate the commandment will become lesser and lesser.

Also there will be a change in our attitude. Presently we are likely to think that our violations are necessary and dictated by the circumstances. We consider them a necessary evil. But as we progress, by the grace of the guru, we will find that we do not violate the commandments even in situations where we once thought it was necessary. Thus by the grace of guru the number of occasions that are likely to provoke us becomes lesser and lesser. We no longer violate as before thus making real progress.

The above four strategies should be practiced every day.

5) *Vicara* (study) is a powerful and the most important strategy and this involves the study of the significance of each of the commandments. It is seeing the 'value of a value'. Each month we must focus on the commandment chosen for the month. During the "*ahimsa*" month we must collect as much information as possible on this commandment and study the literature for at least an hour a week and try to understand its significance. Why is *moksha* not possible without giving up *himsa*? Why do we resort to violence-physical or verbal? What precautionary measures can we take to avoid *himsa*? Our analysis will reveal that our violent behavior is always preceded by anger. We can further analyze, why do we get angry? Is it because of certain people? How can we change our behavior (rather than expect others to change theirs) to avoid or minimize getting provoked?

Vichara can be done individually or collectively by forming and participating in study groups. Study groups meet periodically and members of the group get an opportunity to share with the other members as to how they are handling the

commandments in their daily life. There can be discussions and healthy exchange of ideas that is beneficial to all the group members. Study groups inculcate seriousness and a sense of commitment towards practicing the commandment. Participation in study groups is highly efficacious and strongly recommended.

Vicara will reveal that each commandment has a gross aspect and a subtle aspect or many other dimensions. In the first year, *sadhaks* can focus on the grossest aspect of each commandment and in subsequent years turn their attention to the subtler aspects.

Since the ten commandments consume ten months, the question arises: what should a *sadhak* do during the remaining two months of the year? In the eleventh month, the aspirant must strive to give up one bad habit – be it smoking or losing one's temper. Again, we can start from gross, physical habits and proceed to subtle weaknesses. In the last month of the year, the *sadhak* must cultivate one good habit that the aspirant would like to have. If we have the habit of criticizing others, we may want to develop the practice of giving praise where it is due. In case we have a doubt regarding what habits or attributes to focus on the last two months of the programme, we can study the sixteenth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita wherein Krishna discusses demoniacal traits (called *asuri sampath*) or negative qualities and divine traits (*daivi sampath*) or positive attributes.

I wish you a happy new year and a year where you practice these ten commandments and become a better person.

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.३९ ॥

Knowledge, O son of Kunti, is obscured by this persistent foe of the knower, i.e. by craving, as by an insatiable fire.

In previous shloka, Sri Krishna said, Kama and Krodha cover our judgment faculty. Both Kama and Krodha are like two sides of a coin. They are the same. What type of Kama? It is a desire that is similar to fire. Fire will destroy its locus. Desire destroys the mind. It is an insatiable desire like a fire. Oblations cannot fulfill it. Fulfillment of desire leads to even more desire. It can't be satisfied.

Citing story to illustrate this desire, Swamiji said, there was lottery where the prize of the day was a watch. A man won the watch. However, the next day the prize was a scooter. The man who won the watch felt hurt that he had not won the scooter and only got a watch. This is Kama and it is insatiable. The fire is called Kama Rupena. The Kama is an eternal enemy of a scriptural student. It is not an enemy of a non-student. A non-student does not consider desire a weakness and he fully indulges in fulfilling his desires. Now, after studying Gita, I will feel guilty. Citing another example, a man has Diabetes. He nevertheless enjoys all sweets. He also suffers from the consequences. But if a man knows eating sweets is bad for him, even as he eats he feels guilty. Such a person with knowledge suffers before, during and after. While, the ignorant one suffers only afterwards. So either be ignorant or be Knowledgeable. For all those in between, Kama is an eternal enemy. This desire clouds our discriminative power. For a spiritual student, power of discrimination is very important. This power is the first stage of Dharma and Adharma Viveka.

The Gyani needs to know Satya and Asatya. Discrimination is required through out spiritual life. Sadhana Chatushtaya Sampana is required. Kama robs Vivek Shakti.

Shloka # 40:

शुद्धचित्तोऽपि चित्तं शुद्धचित्तोऽपि चित्तं शुद्धचित्तोऽपि चित्तं
शुद्धचित्तोऽपि चित्तं शुद्धचित्तोऽपि चित्तं शुद्धचित्तोऽपि चित्तं 3.40

His abode is said to be the senses, mind and intellect. BY means of these he obscures knowledge and deludes the embodied man.

I am a spiritual seeker and Sri Krishna has pointed out that Kama is my enemy. If so, how to win the war against Kama? Arjuna is a warrior, Sri Krishna is also a Warrior, and hence the analogy of war is used. When a country attacks another country the attacker needs a base. Without a base they cannot support the army. A nourishing base is required. I have to know the enemy bases. This will destroy enemy capabilities. Kama also needs a base to nourish it. They have to be destroyed. What are the bases of Kama? There are three bases. They are:

- The five sense organs introduce sense objects. Thus advertisements are targeted at our Shabda, Sparsha, Roopa, Rasa and Gandha.
- Manaha: The Mind. Ads are only for 20 seconds. They push sense objects to our mind. Mind records the object. It creates a strong Samskara. Mind keeps dwelling on the sense objects. Mind produces Vasana (this is very nice. I want to try it. I want more of it. I cannot survive without it.) Mind does it by avrithi.
- Budhihi: Intellect, contributes to desire by its wrong thinking. What is wrong judgment? The judgment that an external object will make my life happier and more secure. This is the worst judgment, per Vedanta. External world is not a source of joy or sorrow. I alone am source of both Joy and Sorrow. How can I be cause of both? Citing an example, a garland is lying in a semi-dark room. I mistake it for a snake. It becomes a source of sorrow or fear. When I understand myself as I am, it

is Ananda. But not understanding myself is Dukha. So, how to prove that the world is not a source of joy or sorrow.

Citing another example Swamiji says, while one object may cause sorrow one, for another person it may bring joy. Thus, when a person sells his house, he does so probably because he was not happy with it. However, another person buys the house because he likes it. Same thing happens when a man divorces his wife. He now does not like her. She does not bring him joy anymore. She in turn, turns around and marries somebody else, who finds her very interesting and likable.

Thus, the mind, by repeated thinking of an object and the Buddhi, by its wrong judgment, both support Kama.

Shankaracharya's Bhaja Govindam is all about this subject.

These three bases overpower the person and delude him. For a thinking person sense objects become a source of sorrow. Acquiring, maintaining and losing the object, all cause pain. Instead of enjoying what I have, I am reminded of the missing scooter. The more I am used to external crutches the more dependent I become. By covering intelligence, a man becomes deluded.

How Kama attacks and what are its bases were discussed. Now Sri Krishna tells us how to handle Kama?

Shloka # 41:

संयम्यैवात्मनो ज्ञानं प्राप्य विदुः
संयम्यैवात्मनो ज्ञानं प्राप्य विदुः 3.41

Therefore, mighty prince! First controlling the senses, give up this wicked craving that destroys knowledge and realization.

Sri Krishna says you have to handle and conquer Kama. Kama covers discriminative power. It destroys Atmagyanam and Atma

Vigyanam.

Atma Gyanam is gained in two stages. In first stage, one gets Gyanam. In second stage one gets Vigyanam.

First Stage:

Gyanam consists of Atma (consciousness) and Anatma Viveka. Consciousness is the Nithyaha, Akarta, Abhokta, Nirvikaraha, Aprameya, Sanatanaha, Avyaktha etc. It survives death. Seeker now knows he has Atma. I am the body and I have the spirit. This is first stage.

Second Stage:

In second stage instead of saying I am the body and I have Atma, now we have a shift to " I am the Atma with a body". Body is a temporary medium. In waking, I function in this body. In sleep, I don't feel the body. When I set aside the body, I don't experience the world. I am not the body. I am the user of the body. This requires Sravanam, Mananam and Nididhyasanam. This is known as Vigyanam or AparokshaGyanam.

Kama does not allow Gyanam and Vigyanam to come in. When I am immersed in making money, it means Kama has won. One has to find the time for Gyanam and Vigyanam. Scriptural study is compulsory for all, of all ages. Kama obstructs scriptural study. Time is money but nobody says time is moksha. Handle Kama by handling these three bases.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Saddharshanam, Class 7

Greetings All,

Shloka # 9:

The world arises and sets with the “I” thought. Therefore, this world is illumined by the “I” thought. The Reality is the abode of the birth and death of the “I” thought and the world. It is One, complete and without birth and decay.

Continuing his teaching and refreshing our memory of last class, Swamy Paramarthananda said, in all these shlokas Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi is stressing the importance of Ahamkara Vichara that leads to Brahman. At that moment Ahamkara and Jagat are reduced to nama and roopa. This is what we learnt in last class.

In the next shloka there is an incidental diversion but an important one.

Shloka # 10:

Let the worship of names and forms of the Supreme , be the means to the vision of Truth. Know that abidance in Reality as “It is me” alone is the vision of truth.

Third and fourth lines of this shloka are discussed first. In previous shloka Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi said Ahamkara Vichara should lead to Adishtana Gyanam or Brahma Nishta. This is Sad Darshanam. Aim of Ahamkara Vichara is Sad Darshanam. What is Sad? It is Brahman. It is Ahamkara Adishtanam. It is the title of this text. When we say Sad Darshanam or Brahma Gyanam, one can mistake it as knowledge about an object called Brahman. Knowledge of anything means there is an object to

know and a subject who knows. One may think of Brahma Gyanam as an object or also as an experience of Brahman. To remove this misconception, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says, it is actually abidance in Brahman and not the knowing of Brahman. In Sad is Vastu. **Vastu in Vedanta parlance means Reality.** In common parlance Vastu means things. Meaning of Vasa is "to exist". Vastu means that which remains always or Brahman. Therefore abiding in Brahman is Gyanam. To avoid objectification of Brahman the word abiding is used. The word abidance can also cause confusion as one can think of it as going deep down and sitting on a Brahman, like a carpet. One has to understand the meaning of abidance properly.

What is Brahma Nishta? Abidance is a stage of knowledge where one knows, "that Brahman I am". It is not an object. It is not below for me to sit upon. Brahman is Me. The word Bhava means Gyanam. It is a state of effortless knowledge. It is acquired through Ahamkara Vichara. Brahma Gyanam is Brahma Nishta or abidance in Brahman. It is a stage in which one enjoys the knowledge that I am Brahman, acquired through Ahamkara Vichara.

Once you acquire this knowledge, it is always present. If you say you have experienced Brahman keep in mind it can be displaced by another experience. Any experience is displaceable. Knowledge, however, cannot be displaced. Citing an example, knowledge of your phone number cannot be displaced. Even a great sorrow cannot displace knowledge of your phone number. That is why we work for this knowledge. Once you get the knowledge, you don't have to work for it anymore. It is always there for you. You are in a state of knowledge. Just as you know your phone number all the time, so also you know you are in a state of knowledge because it is retrievable in your mind. It does not require remembering. It should be available at all times. Nishta is a state of knowledge. You know who you are. Even as we know Ahamkara Gyanam, Atma Gyanam is also now known to us. Atma Gyanam is

also available, on demand.

Brahman is neither an object nor an object under me. Brahman is Me. As per Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi this is Saddarshanam. It is called Vichara Marga.

Now comes a question? This is raised in first two lines of the shloka. Is Vichara Marga (Gyana Marga) easy or difficult? Some say it is easy and others say it is difficult. Some parts of the Scriptures say it is easy while others say it is difficult. Gyana Marga is compared to walking on razors edge. The answer is that it depends upon who the person concerned is. For a prepared person it is easy while for an unprepared person it is difficult. For many people, sitting is difficult, for others it is not. The question then is who is considered prepared and who is not? It is a Sadhana Chatushtaya Sampana person who can be considered reasonably prepared. In humanity probably 99% of people are not prepared. The most important quality required is detachment. Detachment means free from Kama, Krodha, Raga and Dvesha. Most of us are not prepared. That is the reason Vedas have kept Gyana Sadhana as the last one. Therefore, Upanishads occur in Veda Anta. So, Gyana Marga is not easy. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi cannot be considered an example, as he is an exception.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says a person should go through a religious life. One should lead a Dvaita life before advaita. Ramana Cult people miss this point. May you remain in Mithya until Ahamkara matures to pluck you down. Raw fruit is difficult to pluck. When you pluck it oozes in sorrow at the separation. It is not ready for separation. A tree is required for the ripening. At that point Dvaitam loses its charm.

Never criticize puja. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi was the greatest Bhakta of Arunachala. How to do puja of Brahman? Worship Saguna Brahman in form of Ishta Devata such as Shiva, Krishna etc.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi cannot be quoted as an example as he was genius. Ramana Cult people commit this mistake. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi warns that do not give up puja. Puja helps with Nirguna Gyanam.

He gives another warning. Dvaita Puja is very important, but never take it as an end in itself. You have to go beyond it. Use Dvaitam to go beyond Dvaitam.

What is the connection between Puja and Vichara? Puja is an indirect means also known as Parampara Sadhana. Vichara is direct means known as Sakshat Sadhana. Puja helps Vichara. Vichara helps Gyanam. Religious life leads to philosophical enquiry. This enquiry then leads to Moksha. It is a very important verse as it teaches the majority of us that we need both Puja and Vichara.

Shloka # 11:

All pairs of opposites and all triads shine, taking the support of some entity. When that is searched, all will get dropped. To them who see the Truth, there is never any wavering.

Now back to Vichara, after emphasizing puja. The entire cosmos that we experience is nothing but Brahman with name and form. On this Brahman appear many names and forms. We look at it as subject and object also called Dvandam. We can also look at it as Triputi (The division of the knower, the known and the knowing instrument or the act of knowing – the pramata, the prameyam and the pramanam). All are one Brahman. Of this Brahman, part is Satyam and another part is Mithya. Mithya has Nama and Roopa. Thus, the entire cosmos is a mixture of Satyam and Mithya (nama and roopa).

Shankaracharya has said: You can never experience pure Brahman. Nor does pure Mithya exist. Whatever we experience is a mixture of the two.

The very "I", singular, is also a mixture of Satya Atma and Mithya Ahamkara. Therefore, when we talk of Self-enquiry, the enquiry is into a mixture of Atma and Ahamkara. Therefore, in shastras the word used is Viveka or sorting it out rather than Vichara. Atma Ahamkara Viveka is self-enquiry. Since "I ' is a mixture of both it is called Ahamkara Vichara and sometimes Atma Vichara. If both descriptions are right which is a more accurate one? One may ask what do we care?

Swamiji said this information is required to change our attitude. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says Atma Vichara is more accurate although Ahamkara Vichara is also acceptable. Enquiry into Mithya won't lead us anywhere as it is a mystery. It leads us only to further mysteries. You get lost going round and round. Don't enquire into Mithya, say the Vedas.

Therefore Atma Vichara will lead you somewhere.

The second answer is Mithya is nourished by ignorance, as it is a false entity. Like in the snake and rope analogy, the snake exists because of ignorance of rope. Rope enquiry leads to rope knowledge that removes the snake. Therefore Vichara is Adishtana Vichara, leading to Adishtana Gyanam destroying Adishtana Agyanam. With this the Mithya serpent is destroyed.

Questions such as: How did the universe come into being? How did the first Karma occur? This is mystery leading to more mystery. Jagat Vichara is not the goal of Vedanta. So, Atma Vichara is Self-enquiry. This is the essence of this Shloka.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 50

Greetings All,

Shloka # 36:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय 3.36

Arjuna said:

Now impelled by what does man commit sin? O Krishna, though loath to sin, he is driven to it forcibly, as it were.

Continuing his teachings, Swami Paramarthananda said, with shloka # 35 the topic of Karma Yoga has completed. Recapping previous class he said Karma yoga is the first step of spiritual sadhana. Although it does not lead to liberation it gives a person Gyana Yogyata. Once he has Gyana Yogyata he does not need Karma Yoga anymore. He can take to Sanyasa ashrama or Grihasta Ashrama with reduced Karma Yoga. Only in Gyana Yoga can one get liberation.

A karma Yogi is one who leads a Dharmic way of life, with dharmic actions dedicated to God. Dharma is an ethical and moral way of life. **It's very definition is leading a life where every action is a performed as worship of the divine or as Deva-arpanam.** If one fails to follow Karma Yoga one is spiritually destroyed.

Now, Arjuna asks his question. Setting the stage for this question, swamiji says, every human being has discriminating power and they know ethics. These ethics are common sense rules. Even a thief knows ethics, which is why he steals secretly. Even a thief does not like his own money to be stolen. Everyone knows telling lies is wrong. **Dharma can be summarized as " What I do not want others to do to me, same I**

should not do to others”. This is dharma. If I want everybody to love me then I should not hate anybody. Similarly, I want everybody to help me, which means that I should be helping others. Everybody knows dharma. I clearly know what is dharma. Here Arjuna asks, why do I still not follow it? What is the force that makes me violate my own conscience?

In many religions they place this force as external such as devil or Shaitan. Some think God himself makes me do it. Some think the devil makes me do it. Some think fate makes me do it. Hence the saying: Vinasha Kale Viparitha Buddhi. If this force is in me, can I control it? Do we have the will?

Some say there is no will. Everything is fatalistic. Some say will is feeble, in front of such forces.

Shloka # 37:

कृष्ण उवाच ॥

इह भवति क्रोधोऽपि भवति मत्सरः
इह भवति लोभोऽपि भवति मदोऽपि
इह भवति भयं भवति भ्रमोऽपि भवति ॥3.37॥

Sri Krishna said:

This is craving, this is wrath, born of the constituents of Rajas. He is voracious, a great sinner, know him to be the foe in this context.

From this shloka and till the end of the Chapter, Sri Krishna now answers Arjuna’s question.

He says there is no external force controlling us. It is all within us. There is no external devil. What is this basic force? It is our Ignorance that is the root cause. Ignorance works at two levels. They are:

1. Ignorance with respect to dharma and adharma.
2. At a higher level, it is our Atma Anatma Agyana.

Sri Krishna does not talk of Agyanam. Agyanam however expresses itself in two forces. They are Kama and Krodha. They both are the problems. Therefore, in the following verses, Sri Krishna is going to discuss the problem of Kama Krodhaḥ, the source of Kama Krodhaḥ, and the remedy or the medicine to the disease of Kama Krodhaḥ. Thus, the three topics are: kama krodhah svarupam; kama krodhah karanam; kama krodhah pariharaha. This is now going to be discussed.

Kama is desire. Krodha is anger. Every human being experiences desire, intimately. The object of desire may vary from individual to individual. The anger too, you feel intimately. It is at the tip of your nose. It is experienced intimately. Both of them are born out of our Rajo Guna. They obstruct Karma Yoga and Dharmic way of life. Desire is a glutton. There is no way to fulfill all desires. They never end. Actually it continues to expand and increase.

Why is it so?

All desires are expressions of one basic desire. Right now, I feel incomplete with myself. My struggle is, how to become complete within myself. All desires are superficial. Finally, I want to become one with infinite. I do not want Kuraiva (Tamil, feeling of want) but want Niraiva (Tamil, feeling of fullness).

Vedanta says the incomplete one (finite) can never become infinite. You can never become poornaha. Our approach is illogical. Finite is trying to become infinite.

Swami Chinmayananda described happiness as follows:

Happiness=desires fulfilled/number of desires you have.

Unfortunately the numbers of desires you have keep expanding and this causes happiness to keep falling.

Finite wanting to become infinite is not possible. So what? As

anger. How does desire cause problems for humans? Sri Krishna says desire causes problems by blunting one's reasoning power. A person blinded by desire cannot think or discriminate. Buddhi has to decide what action to take. It has to decide whether to give importance to spirituality or go after materialism. Every moment in life one has to decide this. Life is full of choices. Kama covers our Vivek Shakti. How does Kama cover Vivek Shakti? Citing examples:

1. Like smoke covering fire. Agni has brightness and can enlighten. It is covered by smoke that covers the light.
2. Mirror covered by dust. Dust cannot reflect my face.
3. Child in a fetus covered by the womb cannot function fully. It does not have enough space.

In the same way covered by desire, Buddhi cannot think.

All three examples have significance. When covered by smoke, you just need to fan it. With a dirty mirror you have to wipe it off. With a child you cannot do anything but wait. It has to mature for 10 months and then come out. Some desires can be easily removed. If desire is of some intensity one has to go through fulfillment of desire. When desire is intense, you have to allow it to go through and hope that one grows out of it. It may take time.

Take away from class:

This definition of dharma was new to me. It is something we should all follow.

“ What I do not want others to do to me, same I should not do to others”.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Saddharshanam, Class 6

Greetings All,

Shloka # 7:

Apart from the body made up of five sheaths, does the world shine? Let people explain. Without that five fold body who can perceive this world?

Continuing his teaching and refreshing our memory of last class, Swamy Paramarthananda said, in all these shlokas Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi is continuing his campaign against Ahamkara. This requires a big effort, as Ahamkara, which is a hero today, is actually a villain. Ahamkara has been hero for many lives. All our struggles are to support and nourish Ahamkara. Now Vedanta asks you to change your attitude. This is difficult for both student and teacher. Even if the student agrees, superficially, he still thinks in terms of improving Ahamkara, not eliminating it. Ahamkara can now claim to have studied Vedanta. So teacher's goal is to attack Ahamkara. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi's effort is focused on Ahamkara enquiry to pull it down. It is a Mithya and can be pulled down only by enquiry. Even as darkness cannot withstand light, so also Ahamkara cannot withstand enquiry.

Ahamkara in Dharma shastra is different from Ahamkara of Vedanta. In Dharma Shastra, Ahamkara means pride and superiority and it's absence is humility.

In Vedanta, however, it means the sense of individuality.

Even a humble person can have Ahamkara. A humble Agyani still

has individuality. This Ahamkara is "I" or individuality that is born out of identification with Pancha Kosha. Because of it Pancha Kosha becomes my localization. Virtues of Pancha Kosha are my virtue. Their humility is my humility. To say I am humble is philosophical Ahamkara as I am identifying with virtue of Anatma. Identifying with virtues and weaknesses is Ahamkara. This Ahamkara is born out of wrong identification, which is ignorance. Ignorance is the oil that sustains the Ahamkara flame. You dry up this oil by Knowledge. When ignorance goes, Ahamkara also goes.

Shloka # 8:

The entire world is of the form of sound etc. The existence of sound etc. is illumined by the functions of the sense organs. The existence of sense organs is in the control of the mind. Therefore, we say that the world is made up of the mind.

We have a vast universe in front of us. It is almost limitless. Scientists have not yet found its limits. It is also expanding. The Lord created it. Even though this vast universe exists, only a very small segment falls in my range of experiences. Universe experienced by me is very small. The "experienced" universe alone binds us and not the vast existing universe. In some part of the world if something happens, I do not know it nor do I respond to it. I am a Jivana mukta with respect to them.

Therefore it is not the existing universe that disturbs me rather the one experienced by me. This experienced universe produces Raga, Dvesha and Asuya. It is this experienced universe that burdens me. We always look preoccupied. What is the preoccupation about? It is about my wife, husband, children, home etc. that bothers us. Therefore Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says experienced universe (Jiva Srishti) is the bondage and not the existing universe (Ishwara Srishti)

The experienced universe is there due to Ahamkara. Prameya

(experienced universe) is there due to Pramata (Ahamkara). To tackle this binding universe go to Ahamkara, which is its reverse. The Ahamkara determines the quality of the experienced universe. If Ahamkara is Satva, the experienced universe is also Satva Pradhana. Duryodhana and Dharmaputra went back to check on the world. After returning, Dharmaputra said people were all wonderful, while Duryodhana said they were all treacherous. Thus, quality of Ahamkara determines quality of experienced universe.

Don't struggle with universe rather tackle Ahamkara. Swami Chinmayananda told a story. A boy was disturbing his father. Father tore up the newspaper and asked him to put it together. The boy brought the paper back after a short time. When asked how he did it so fast, he said in the back of the page was a picture of Tendulkar. He assembled the picture quickly. The world is also a jigsaw puzzle. Reverse the world and it is Ahamkara. Tackle Ahamkara. This is the essence of the shloka.

Details of shloka:

Universe is experienced in a five-fold manner. They are through Sound, feeling, form, taste and smell (Shabda, Sparsha, Roopa, Rasa and Gandha).

How to prove the existence of the world? Existence is proved only through operation of the five sense organs. World is called Prapancha or that which exists in five fold segments. Each segment is distinct and present. Eye cannot hear sound. Thus, each segment reports separately. Existence of world is dependent on sense organs. Thus, for a totally blind person, form and color don't exist.

Existence of sense organs depends on the mind. How? Sense organs can serve only when backed by the mind. Suppose in middle of a class if mind strays somewhere, even the ears don't listen at that time.

Sense organs are under power of mind. When mind is withdrawn,

sense organs don't sense. Existence of world is dependent on sense organs. Sense organs are dependent on mind. Thus, existence of world depends on mind. They are interconnected, like two sides of one coin. This mind is called Ahamkara. The sense of individuality is located in the mind. Two methods are used to clarify this:

1. Technically: Ahamkara is mind with reflected consciousness. (RM Reflected mind+ RC Reflected Consciousness).
2. Practically: Mind alone is the "I" sense because only when mind is active individuality "I" is alive.

In waking and dream, the mind is functioning. I have individuality as localized "I". Therefore Samsara is also there in both states.

In Sushupthi, when mind is temporarily dissolved, "I" is gone, my bio data is dissolved, Ahamkara is dissolved and world is also dissolved. Mind and Ahamkara are synonymous. Therefore Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi concludes that universe is a product of the mind. Therefore, it is a product of Ahamkara as well.

Shloka # 9:

The world arises and sets with the "I" thought. Therefore, this world is illumined by the "I" thought. The Reality is the abode of the birth and death of the "I" thought and the world. It is One, complete and without birth and decay.

It is further explanation of previous shloka.

Since Ahamkara and universe are interconnected, one proves the other. So, both arrive simultaneously and both disappear simultaneously as well. In Jagrat and Swapna states Ahamkara rises, as does Universe. In Sushupthi both of them dissolve.

The world that arises in front of you, it is you who allowed

it to rise. By the same logic Samasra dissolves with Ahamkara. Elimination of Samasra means elimination of Ahamkara.

In deep sleep both dissolve. Unfortunately it is a temporary and dormant state. God has created this state to give us a taste of Moksha. Thus, Moksha equals sleep. Everything, Papam, punyam etc. are all gone in this state. The moment you wake up they all comes back. Enquiry, however, resolves them permanently.

The question comes, if Ahamkara is resolved, will it be suicidal?

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says Ahamkara is the villain. Once it is destroyed the real hero, Atman, emerges. The real "I" emerges. Removal of Ahamkara is not suicidal. Many philosophers say Advaita is suicidal. You are only removing Pseudo "I".

What is the real "I"?

The real "I" is the eternal principle, consciousness, non-dual, and division-less one. It is free from Punarapi Jananam and Punarapi Maranam. It is free from birth and death. It is Poornam while Ahamkara is always wanting or Apoornam. The real I is the substratum in which Ahamkara and world dissolve. Subject and Object are resolved in the real "I".

Discussion & Take away:

The question was asked how does one practice Devarpanam? Many answers were given, all interesting one's. I was taken by Dr. Katta's answer. He said Swamiji has answered this question in the past. Swamiji says, pick one activity for Devarpanam. Say, before eating any food commit to performing Devarapnam. Practice this one activity, every time you eat, for a month or two till it becomes second nature. Then pick another activity to emulate. This way soon your daily activities will all become Devarpanam. Do consider adopting this idea.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 49

Greetings All,

Shloka # 33:

एतन्मनुष्योऽपि ज्ञानवान् स्वभावोऽनुसृतः
सर्वजन्तुनां भवति स्वभावोऽनुसृतः ३.३३

“Even a man of knowledge behaves according to his nature. All living beings conform to nature. What can repression do?”

Continuing his teachings, Swami Paramarthananda said, after talking about karma yoga Sri Krishna is summing up karma yoga in verses 31 through 35. In the last two verses he discussed the benefits and losses of following karma yoga.

Benefit includes: One who follows Karma Yoga will get his mind purified and then proceed to Gyana Yoga which will lead him to knowledge and then liberation.

Losses include: One who does not follow Karma yoga faces spiritual loss and destruction.

Now, in shloka # 33, Sri Krishna discusses our innate nature. Everybody has an innate nature based upon his or her Rajas, Tamas and Sattva Gunas. This is called Svabhava. One's life should be based upon one's Svabhava. Even a Gyani's life is based upon his Svabhava. Each Gyani has a different Svabhava, thus we have writing, speaking, and teaching Gyani's. Even the

be controlled.

So the question is, can we transform ourselves?

Answering this question, Sri Krishna establishes free will. Animals do not have free will. Humans, however, do have it and we can control our nature.

We all have certain basic characteristics that dictate our mind. These thoughts saturate us, then translate into words and then finally into action.

Thus:

Svabhava>Thought>Words>Action.

The thoughts are Raga and Dvesha. We divide the world into likes and dislikes based upon our Svabhava. Swamiji says, if you place a group of children in a room and give them a variety of toys, you will see Raga and Dvesha in action. Svabhava produces Raga and Dvesha Vritihi and we cannot control it. Some thoughts are attractive while others are not. We are all bundles of Raga (likes) and Dvesha (dislikes). Even in TV interviews of stars one common question asked is what are their likes and dislikes. Even Gods have their likes and dislikes. Thus, the huge Ganesha likes for his vehicle the small mouse while Kartikeya likes his peacock. With regard to every sense object we have preferences. In fact you cannot define a person without his likes and dislikes; you define a person in terms of his likes and dislikes.

Arrival of thought depends upon Svabhava. One has no control over it. However, whether to let a thought remain or not is in our control. Here, there is free will. Those thoughts that are nourished, become stronger, then they become words. Every word is based on a build up thought. We can control perpetuation of thoughts and thus control words. Those thoughts then convert to action. Action is the grossest product of the subtlest thought. If I can control thought, I can control action. This

that the plane he was to travel on had an accident and many people died. The next day he called the watchman, thanked him and rewarded him as well for saving his life. He also fired the watchman as his dream was Paradharmā. Even death in Svadharmā is acceptable. Paradharmā is harmful.

So Arjuna your Svadharmā is to fight .

With this Sri Krishna concludes Karma Yoga.

Now Arjuna has a question.

Shloka # 36:

॥ अहं कर्मफलं प्राप्नुयान्मृत्युं कश्चिदपि ॥
॥ अहं कर्मफलं प्राप्नुयान्मृत्युं कश्चिदपि ॥ 3.36 ॥

“Now, impelled by what does man commit sin? O Krishna! Though loath to sin, he is driven to it forcibly, as it were.”

Arjuna asked: Oh Sri Krishna , scriptures are there for direction. I agree following Karma yoga is healthy while not doing so is harmful. God has given us the power of discrimination between right and wrong. Dayananda Swamy used to say that every human being knows what is right and what is wrong. Even the thief knows what he does is wrong, that is the reason he does it in secret.

Citing a story of two thieves, who after stealing in a house began dividing the loot and in this process fell asleep. One thief got up in the middle of the night and took off with the entire loot. When the second thief got up in the morning he was very upset that the second thief stole from him. Ignorance of value is not the problem. Ravana is quoted as having said: I know values, but I cannot follow them.

In spite of knowing what is right or wrong how do humans commit such mistakes or adharmā? There is some force in us that pushes us towards adharmic action. What is that force Oh Sri Krishna?

Sri Krishna now answers this question.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Saddharshanam, Class 5

Greetings All,

Shloka # 5:

“ Arguments that this is real or false, sentient or inert, sorrow or joy, are to no purpose. The state free from all thoughts, without “I” notion and the world, is supreme state desired.”

Continuing his teaching on Saddarshana, Swami Paramarthananda said, even though Brahman is Adishtanam of everything, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says Jiva Vichara is most important. Jagat and Ishwara Vichara do not address Ahamkara directly.

Therefore, even after years of enquiry, Ahamkara may continue to be strong, as Samsara continues even after study of scriptures. This is because the study has not attacked Ahamkara. Samsara is located in Ahamkara. The existence of Samara means Ahamkara is still there. So, the study may not have attacked Ahamkara. As per Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi all studies are useless unless Ahamkara is attacked.

Only in Jiva Vichara is Ahamkara falsified and dissolved. With this Jagat and Ishwara also fall. The result of this enquiry

should be a division-less state where Ahamkara is absent. All problems belong to Ahamkara or I. The desirable state is one in which there is no division (first person, second person and third person; Pramata, Prameya and Pramanam; Jiva, Jagat and Ishwara). In this state, it does not mean perceptuality is absent. You still see the world, however, there is no more factual division. Division is understood as Mithya. They are understood as Nama and Roopa. I see only water, not the wave and the ocean anymore. The world is not seen as real. It is that state of wisdom in which the world is not seen as a separate thing. One does not see localized Ahamkara or finite I. Subject Object division is falsified. Such a state of Gyanam is Paramam. It is a state of Advaita Gyanam. In the state of advaitam, one is in a state of experience. State of experience is always a temporary one and the experience will be replaced. Advaita Anubhava is false as Dvaitam is present in potential form. Any experience is temporary and displaceable by next experience. But advaita is the gyanam that I am non-dual at all times and that divisions are all mithya appearing and disappearing in me. They cannot disturb my Advaita Gyanam. I am ever non-dual. Knowledge alone is supreme, as it will not be disturbed by anything. Just as I am sure that two plus two equals four so also this knowledge is clear and undisturbed. Anubhava advaitam is mithya.

Shloka # 6:

As long as there is an understanding that I am with form (that is, I am the body) there will be the idea about the world and the Lord that they too have form. If the Self is without form, who will see? That vision is indeed one, Limitless and complete.

Bhagwan Ramana Maharishi here gives further reasons for performing Jiva Vichara. He says it is Ahamkara that is coloring our perception of the world and god. The way we look at Jagat and Ishwara is dependent upon how you look at yourself. If I cannot change my perception of myself, I cannot

change my world and God vision. So to change way we look at ourselves is crucial. As you look at yourself, so you look at God. If you see Self as localized then you will see world and God as localized as well. Here you see God as in Vaikunta.

Citing an example through a small incident, Swamiji said, a young girl said she liked Sonia Gandhi very much. When asked why, she said Sonia dressed very well. She is typical of many teenagers who are very conscious of their dress. She can only see everything in terms of dresses.

We too are dependant on the Kosha (one of the pancha kosha's) that is dominant in us. I look at the world through this "I". As I look at myself, so I look at the world. The "I" is dominant. Don't try to realize god without realizing your own nature. Nirguna Brahman cannot be understood with Deha Abhimana. So one has to question the notion of "I".

One thinks of improving individuality. One wants to be a happier father, a happier mother etc. I don't want to displace it. Aim of Vedanta is destruction of fatherhood and motherhood and not to improve the father or mother. There is never a finite happy person. Our normal instinct is to decorate our ego. Decorated Ahamkara will always be sickly and dying.

As long as you retain or want to retain your ego, you will continue to have Saguna Jagat and it will give you both pain and pleasure. This is because of Saguna Ahamkara. Your notion of God will also be Saguna Ishwara; nirguna Ishwara will not appeal to you and thus mortality will continue to haunt you.

If you say I will retain Ahamkara and I will still get protection from Saguna Ishwara, that God will bring only destruction. So long as division is there, mortality exists and fear will continue.

So Ishwara has to be nirguna. You should become nirguna Atma. It is like the actor who knows inside that he is someone else in the green room. I am the formless consciousness or the one

that transcends form. Idea of localized individual should go. If a person sees that he is really formless consciousness and it is a fact for him, this is nirguna atma.

Bhagawan Ramana Mahraishi does not deal with the procedure for Aham Vichara. For this one has to go Guru Shastra Upadesha. Many followers of Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi's don't believe they have to go to Shastra's for Gyanam. This is unfortunate.

Shatras will teach you about that one Vision. Here Jiva Jagat and Ishwara will all be one Sat darshanam. This is only possible in nirguna state. Each Jiva, Jagat and Ishwara become limitless. All three are just words for one truth. Therefore it will be a vision of poornatvam or limitlessness.

Shloka # 7:

Apart from the body made up of five sheaths, does

The world shine? Let people explain. Without the five fold body who can perceive this world?

Continuing with same topic of Jiva Vichara, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says Jagat and Ishwara Vichara will not be meaningful until Ahamkara is attacked. Here one has to understand your self first.

As per this shloka the very perception or existence of world and god are dependent on the arrival of Ahamkara. Therefore in sleep when Ahamkara is temporarily dissolved, the first person is not there; therefore there is also no world, nor is there the cause of the world. Karya Jagat and Karana Ishwara occur only in presence of Ahamkara. Ahamkara is basis for existence of world and God. Ahamkara comes into being with identification with Anatma (body). "I" identify with the body, thus the person comes into being. He then creates God and thus division is created.

Tad Antara means with Deha-abhimana, you descend from your

original nature. "I", original one, come into body and take a role. God also takes a role when he takes an Avatara. Our birth is a consequence of our ignorance while God's avatara is not.

Without Deha-abhimana there is no Ahamkara. Anatma consists of Pancha Kosha. Ahamkara rises with Pancha Kosha Abhimana. Without Ahamkara, who will see? Where is the world and god to see? Elimination of division requires elimination of Ahamkara. Don't try improving Ahmakara. Eliminating it is your goal.

Summary: (my understanding)

In the Chaitnayam many forms and names manifest. The forms and names constitute Samsara and include all sentient and insentient beings in it. For some reason a form develops an "I am" sense. This is Ahamkara coming into being. With this now comes identification of this small "I" with the world around it. Through transactions with other forms (mother, father, the dog, the cat etc.) it learns to become a Samsari. In this small "I", thus, a world perception is created called Jagat. In this small "I" a vision of God is also created (Shiva, Vishnu, Allah etc.). This is the saguna Ishwara. We have to go back to our origins, to the time we became a manifestation, when we were a part of Chaitanyam and not a part of the small "I". This is the supreme knowledge. Hence the analogy of being just water (chaitnayam) and not the wave (the body) or ocean (samsara, many forms or bodies) is used.

Let me know if my understanding is correct.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Saddarshanam, Class 4

Greetings All,

Shloka # 3:

“The primary cause of the world and the “ I” is accepted by all to be some Lord with immeasurable power. Here, in this picture, that One alone has become the seen, the seer, the canvas and the light also.”

Continuing his teaching on Saddarshana, Swami Paramarthananda said, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi starts the teaching of the division-less existence with this shloka. The divisions are presented as Jiva and Jagat. While discovering the Adishtanam we discover Nama and Roopa as well. In discovering wave and ocean we realize that there is nothing called wave or ocean. The removal of substantiality is called elimination of division. While you still see the ocean and the wave, you realize, through wisdom, that they are without substance. The names are used only for transaction. Jiva and Jagat perception can't be removed but you know their Adishtanam as Brahman. Both Jiva and Jagat are nama and roopa. This is the essence of the teaching. It is the falsification of division by knowledge of the division.

The One division-less existence appears with superficial names and forms. The Waker goes to bed as a non-dual person. In dream he becomes both the transactor (dreamer) and the object of transaction (dream). This bifurcation is superficial. Once I wake up the division is resolved. There is no dreamer nor the dream. The division is not real, but apparent.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi cites an example of a painting on a cloth. In the painting there is an observer and an observed.

Both are on the same canvas. Just as the actors in a movie screen are superficial, the one division-less canvas appears as an observer and observed. In the case of painting the Adishtanam is the canvas, a Jadam. In life, the Brahman appears as the Observer and Observed, it is, however, alive. For being able to perform this, the Brahman has to have a great power. It makes the impossible, possible. Infinite cannot be divided, however, it appears as divided. This power is called Apar Shakthi or also known as Maya.

A question can arise that if Brahman is one and Shakthi is another, are they not divided? The reality is that this power of Brahman is also an apparent one only. The Brahman has the apparent Shakthi to create the Mithya division.

Shloka # 4:

“All philosophies begin with the naming of the principles of the individual, the world and the supreme soul. As long the notion of “ I” remains, so long these three will also exist. The abidance in the Self where there is absence of the “I” notion is the best of all.”

Here Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says there are many religions and philosophical systems that have come up to give moksha. Even in India we have six Nastika and six Astika systems. All of them claim to give us moksha shastra. All of them have to start with certain fundamental Tatvams as their philosophy. All start with an introduction of their Tatvams.

They all accept the following three Tatvams. They are:

- Jivaha: The human being, the hero of the philosophy.
- Jagat: Jiva interacting with Jagat causes all problems. All our complaints are about somebody else and rarely about ourselves.
- Ishwara: He is the one who creates the Jiva and Jagat. Here Ishwara is one of the Triad. So, this Ishwara is finite.

After introduction of these three Tatvams, the philosophies introduce Sadhanas such as to "Serve the world". All Sadhanas address Jiva (Upasaka), Jagat (Alambanam) and Ishwara (Upasya).

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says all these systems are beautiful, however, all their Sadhanas pre-supposes division. All of them preserve divisions as well. So even after a lot of Sadhana the Jiva remains a Jiva, maybe as an elevated Jiva, such as Rama Upasaka or Hanuman Upasaka. He continues as one of the triad. Therefore, he is said to have Ahamkara. Ahamkara is finite and with it comes mortality and insecurity. Therefore, Samsara continues. All these Sadhanas preserve Samsara and divisions.

As long as the Triad is maintained in the name of divine sadhanas, there will be the finite Ahamkara. The insecure and mortal Ahamkara continues. However, all these sadhanas have not attacked duality, rather they preserve the Triad. So, to refine Ahamkara one starts with the Triad. Once he has become Gyana Yogya, then he must attack duality. Only when division is eliminated, only when Triad is negated, only then Ahamkara is uprooted and only then moksha occurs. This is also called Apavada. Therefore, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says, in Sarvottama Nishta or in the culminating stage, which is the greatest stage, there is no more Ahamkara claiming to be a devotee or Upasaka or Gyani. Even the claim "I am a Gyani" is Ahamkara. Brahman does not have any attributes including the one of a Gyani.

I am not a Karta, Bhokta, Bhakta, Upasaka or Gyani. Knower of Brahman never claims, " I am a Gyani".

The greatest state is one of wisdom or Gyana Nishta. Ahamati Shunyam. In this state, Aham and Shastram both are absent. There is no Gyani or a Shishya. In this state there is a no difference between Pramata (Knower), Prameya (Object) and Pramanam (Proof). In my Budhi I will know that there is no

substance to the wave even if it appears as a wave. The division belongs to Nama and Roopa. All systems are fine in the beginning; however, it is really in the end that we know the greatness of Advaitam. Vedas ask us to start with Karma (Dvaitam) but culminate in Advaitam. This is a valid system of teaching.

Shloka # 5:

“ Arguments that this is real or false, sentient or inert, sorrow or joy, are to no purpose. The state free from all thoughts, without “I” notion and the world, is supreme state desired.”

We have to gain knowledge of the division-less Brahman. To arrive at the Adhishtanam one can enquire into any one of the three, that is Jiva, Jagat or Ishwara. Just as enquiry into jewelry gives us knowledge of the gold so also Mithya Jiva, Jagat and Ishwara's enquiry respectively will lead us to Brahman.

Even though all three Vicharas are acceptable, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi considers Jiva Vichara more efficacious than other two. What is the advantage of Jiva Vichara?

In JivaVichara alone, Ahamkara is directly attacked. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi feels Ahamkara needs a direct attack, as it is the most difficult nut to crack. It is also most intimate object of our attachment. I have nourished it through all transactions (Father –I, Brother- I, Son- I etc.). In and through all vyavaharas Ahamkara continues. Ahamkara is there at home, office and even at Mansarovar. Therefore, Ahamkara has to be attacked directly. This happens only in Jiva Vichara. Jagat and Iswara Vichara's do not attack Ahamkara directly. Ahamkara survives both these Vicharas.

When Ahamkara tries to understand Mithya Samsara it cannot understand it. It will not work because for Ahamkara the World is Satyam.

World + Ahamkara=Mithya for Brahman.

The other problem is that Jagat Vichara does not eliminate Ahamkara, rather, it may nourish Ahamakra. Enquiry into, if world is real or unreal, is futile if it does not knock off Ahamkara. But if Ahamkara is knocked off even the world will lose its capacity to knock you. Therefore attack Ahamkara.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Saddarshanam, Class 3

Greetings All,

Shloka # 2:

“For those who, being afraid of death, have sought shelter in the conqueror of death, the notion “I’ dies first. Thereafter in them (who are) by nature immortal, where is there any room for the notion of death?”

Continuing his teaching on Saddarshana, Swami Paramarthananda said, now in the second shloka Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi is talking of the glory of Shiva Puja. People who are afraid of death perform this puja. Lord Shiva is Mrithyunjaya. The story of Markandeya is famous in this regard. It is said that Lord Shiva actually destroyed his Devotee. This apparent contradiction means Lord Shiva destroys the notion that “ I am a devotee”. This notion is a Mithya. So, by giving him

knowledge he destroys the notion that " I am a devotee" as it is the cause of division. Devotee needs a deity. I am a Bhakta, worshipping a master. This division is a cause of limitation, finitude and plurality. Here one is limited by the other. I am a Devotee notion pre-supposes worshipper worshipped division. Wherever there is division there is mortality.

Thus: Division=Limitation=Death.

Therefore, I am a devotee is a limitation. Ultimately death is the notion that "I am a devotee". Being a devotee causes mortality, per Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi. He says you should get out of this notion. This notion is Ahamkara. This misconception is Samsara. Once Ahamkara is destroyed the devotee deity duality is also destroyed and you are left with "I am". The "Kara" part of Ahamkara is destroyed. "I" the consciousness and "am" the Existence alone remain. Mrithyunjaya gives this blessing. Lord destroys Devoteehood or he makes him one with himself. There is neither deity nor devotee.

Some terms used in the shloka:

Aasrit: Refugee or shelter seeker. Death is chasing every Jiva. Every moment death is attacking some part or other of our body. The world cannot give us security. So one has to take refuge in Shiva. Even Sugriva hides from Vaali in a mountain where Sugriva cannot go. We are all Sugrivas.

Mrithyubhihi: means fear of death. Shiva is destroyer of the fear of death. Yama causes death. Shiva destroys Ahamkara. A physical weapon cannot destroy Ahamkara. It is a notion born out of ignorance. Sad-Adarshanam is cause of Ahamkara. It will go away once ignorance goes away or through knowledge. So Shiva arranges for Guru Shashtra Upadesha or Shiva himself comes as a Guru and imparts the knowledge. Bheda Nasha is moksha. Ahamkara must go then fear goes. After death of

Ahamkara, the devotee is left with "I am". "I am" is existence consciousness and it is immortality. It is my own nature. Every devotee discovers his immortal nature. The basis of the fear goes away. I am afraid of... what? The "what" is now gone. The notion goes. The Ahamkara Karanam is dead. So, perform Shiva puja and you will get opportunity for knowledge. For Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi, Shiva was the local deity of Arunachala, hence his worship of Shiva. Any deity can be worshipped, says Swamiji.

Shloka # 3:

"The primary cause of the world and the " I" is accepted by all to be some Lord with immeasurable power. Here, in this picture, that One alone has become the seen, the seer, the canvas and the light also."

Now the teaching regarding the discovery of the division-less truth begins. I should know that all divisions are just Nama and Roopa in one consciousness. Jiva is only a Nama and Roopa. Jagat is also a Nama and Roopa. Ishwara is also only a Nama and Roopa. This is Vedanta Shastra. Reducing all divisions to Nama and Roopa can be done by analysis or enquiring even one of the divisions. Thus, analysis of the water's wave, bubble or the ocean, any one of them, will lead to the truth. Analyze one ornament and you will understand Gold. Jiva, Jagat and Ishwara Vichara will lead to Adishtanam. Self Realization is God Realization.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi's approach is through Jiva Vichara. He considers it the best approach. Jiva is also Ahamkara. So study of Ahamkara is strongly recommended. Why so? The reasons are:

1. Ahamkara is most intimately available among the three. Body is closest to us. Its proximity also helps.
2. Of the three, Ahamkara is most solid. We are intensely attached to Mamakara or my love for individuality. It is

a difficult one to tackle. So, it must be attacked directly. In the other two, the attack is indirect and not strong enough. In this case it may make you an informed Ahamkara. So, a direct attack on Ahamkara is best approach.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi gives most importance to Ahamkara Vichara. While Upanishad's spend a lot of time on Jagat and Ishwara. In his teachings, he repeatedly talks about Ahamkara Vichara. He also repeatedly talks about the goal of this Vichara. But, surprisingly he does not elaborate on the process of Ahamkara Vichara. He is silent on the process.

This silence can be interpreted in two ways. First, it can be an approval or disapproval. Citing an example of Budha, Swamiji says, some devotees asked Budha about God. But Budha remained silent. From this silence several branches of Buddhism have come into being. One said it was because of nihilism or he did not believe in God. Another said it was because God exists but cannot be expressed. A third one said he probably did not know the answer.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi does not elaborate on the process of Ahamkara Vichara. Some interpret it as meditation on "Who am I", repeatedly. This is an unfortunate interpretation. The Ahamkara Vichara, as per tradition, requires a Guru shastra upadesha. In olden days Vedas were Karna Parampara. When vedas were printed, they did not mark the swaras in the texts. This has resulted in chanting the Vedas wrongly. So, one has to learn from a Guru of Parampara. Therefore Guru Shatra Upadesha must supplement Ahamkara Vichara. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi's teaching with Guru Shatra Upadesha will lay out the process of Ahamkara Vichara.

The following shlokas talk of the goal of this Vichara. The goal is to arrive at the division-less truth and reduce the division-less truth into Nama and Roopa. The division is Jiva, Jagat and Ishwara. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi reduces the three

divisions to two, namely the Subject (Jiva) and the Object (Jagat). Jiva is first person while Jagat is second and third person, both. He does not mention Ishwara. Brahman is Adishtanam of Jiva and Jagat. So, what happened to Ishwara? Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi uses Brahman as a synonym for Ishwara. Nondual Existence is Ishwara. Ishwara has two meanings. They are:

1. Ishwara as one member of plurality that is Jiva, Jagat and Ishwara. Here Ishwara is only a Nama and Roopa.
2. Ishwara as Brahman or Adishtanam. Here he is Satyam.

Ishwara as an object is Mithya. Ishwara as an Adishtanam is Satyam. Further clarification of this Shloka was provided. Some word meanings are:

Idanam: Adishtanam;

Aham: Ahamkara;

Prabhu: Brahman;

Apar: Infinite power to manifest plurality or Maya Shakthi.

Saha Eka Prakashaha: That one non-dual Chaitanya is the observer while the Jiva is the observed. In dream I bifurcate myself into Subject and Object and suffer and enjoy. How can that division-less one divide itself? Infinite cannot become finite. Reality is that It appears as if it is divided. Waker divides himself in dream only notionally, not in reality.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy