

Bagawad Geeta, Class 160: Verses

Shloka # 13:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १२.१३ ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १२.१३ ॥

**He who is not hateful towards any creature,
who is friendly and compassionate, who has no idea of 'mine'
and the idea of
egoism, who is the same under sorrow and happiness, who is
forgiving;**

Continuing his teachings

Swamiji said in first twelve shlokas of Ch. 12 Sri Krishna has talked about a range of sadhanas that together are called Bhakti Yoga.

And as I repeatedly said, bhakthi yoga includes the first two levels of karma yoga; bhakthi yoga includes the next two levels of upasana; and bhakthi yoga includes the last and final level of Gyana yoga as well. And by Gyana yoga we mean vedanta shravana manana nidhidhyasanam, and without this Gyana yoga, the bhakthi yoga series of sadhanas remain incomplete. Bhakthi yoga has to be capped or culminated only through vedanta shravana manana nidhidhyasana, which Sri Krishna calls aksharopasana.

At this stage he becomes a Gyani. He realizes Lord is never away from Me. The distance between Lord and me is only due to my delusion and this notional distance is removed by knowledge. Therefore I am not away from the Lord; Lord is not away from me, saha aham asmi; and aham saha asmi; and a person who has gained this knowledge is called parama hamsah; aham sah; and sah aham; the one who has clearly grasped this is called parama hamsah. And that is why the mantra is also

called parama hamsah mantra; soham hamsah; aham sah soham and therefore this culmination of bhakthi we called in the last class; advaita bhakthi or Gyana nishta.

From Shloka # 13- #19, Sri

Krishna is talking about nature of Gyani Bhakta. He talked about such a bhakti in in two shlokas in Ch.7 and they are further elaborated upon here.

Swami Chinmayananda beautifully says: When love or bhakthi increases, the distance decreases; and that is why we also say when we love someone very intensely; we have an expression he or she is very close to me.

When you love somebody, the greater the love is, lesser the distance. Highest love (infinite) has zero distance. So, in intense love, one embraces, it removes all distance. So also in advaitam, Jivatma paramatma distance is not there. Sri Krishna says Gyani is Me and I am Gyani. We are discussing such a gyani and how he behaves in the world. He has prarabhdha karmas. He also has punyam and papam. Hence he will also face favorable and unfavorable situations; so, how does he respond to them?

Adveshta (non hatred)

First Lakshanam of a Gyani

is, he is one who never justifies hatred, because there is no basis for it. We can disagree with a person or his actions; we may even take action; but hatred is not a method of expression of disapproval. Even criticism should not have a

hint of hatred. I do not reject anybody mentally. I should be able to pray for the well being of all. This inner non-rejection of a person should become natural to me; I may pray that he changes his behavior. This is test #1 for your self; don't test or judge others. We are no one to judge others. Even self-judgment should be used appropriately. It can cause inferiority complexes, self-condemnation etc. It can be used only as an inspiration for more effort. It should be a positive force.

Maitraha: Friend:

Gyani is a friend of everyone. What is definition of a friend. Bhrtahari defines it as: My friend will guide me if I am going in a wrong direction; a lamp throws light everywhere, but underneath itself it is dark. I may not know my problem; so, one who tells me my weaknesses, is a friend; he is one who puts me in a righteous path; My friend is a confidante, he even keeps secrets. He never reveals my private secrets. All my gunas he shares with others. In adversity, people tend to leave. When I lose money all people leave. A friend in need is a friend indeed. In crisis he does not leave you. He is willing to help in the best way he can. Bhrtahari wrote Niti-Shastram and Vairagya shastram.

Karuna (Compassion)

Compassion means a

sensitive mind; that can place itself in other persons mind. We often do this, while watching a movie. When the hero dies, we also cry. A sensitive mind is empathetic. He feels pain of other person. He then wants to help resolve the pain, even as I help myself spontaneously. **One method is praying that I am willing to give benefit of my prayer to someone else. This also is Karuna. The prayer, here, must be sincere. He spontaneously helps the person in trouble.**

Nirmamaha: One without ownership to anything.

So how do you give up your ownership; there are two methods; one is the religious method; another is vedantic method; Religious method is relatively easier.

Vedantic method is when I know I am the atma; I come to know that atma is asangah; atma is like space; not related to or connected to anything; Therefore atma is nitya sambandha rahita; free from all relations and associations, and since I am the asanga atma; how can I be connected to anything; how can I claim anything as mine. And therefore nirmamatvam is owning up the asanga atma svarupam.

Religious method: By understanding that everything I possess is a temporary gift from God for use, after that I have to give it back. And after using that I have to leave it back; therefore whether they are people, children, mother, father, everything and every person is a gift; Therefore, I remember

Oh Lord I am grateful to you for giving me everything; and I will use them for my growth; However, when the appropriate time comes and when you choose to take them back, I will not make any complaint against you; I will only address a Thanks to you. It will say, Oh Lord; thank you for giving me my mother, father, the grand mother, grandfather, the spouse, children, anything ultimately including the body; therefore remembering that everything belongs to the Lord:

It is not a mere prayer but I must mean it from my innermost heart; and that is called nirmamatvam. We need not physically give up anything; we can use everything; with the awareness that they are meant for my use but they are not meant for my ownership; it has nothing to do with the physical possession;

Here, you need not physically give up anything. Just be aware that you have no ownership.

Nirahamakara:

Nirahankarah: When I have got ownership and **identification with the external world it is called mamakarah**; and when I have got ownership and identification with my own sharira trayam; sthula; sukshma; karana shariram; that ownership is called ahamkarah; **Identification with the body-mind-complex is ahamkara**; and identification with everything external is mamakara; and how do you give up the mamakara? The method is to remember that this body is a gift from the Lord. I have told you Bhrthari wrote Neethi shatakam and vairagya shatakam; in his Vairagya shatakam; in the end he writes a beautiful verse. This is the thank you note; given by an enlightened

person at the time of death; when everybody tries to cry and grieve, Bhrthari tells a wise person what will be his attitude; So in that beautiful verse he addresses all the five elements: akasha; vayu; agni; apah; prithvi;

And

addressing all of them, he says: Oh Elements; you have all given a portion of yours for building up this body; body has got akasha; a portion, and it has got vayu, in the form of breath; it has got agni in the form of temperature; and it has got jalam inside; water is there; we drink; and it has got earth; all the weight is the earth; Therefore this physical body called pancha bhouthika shariram; is a gift from the five elements given for me; so that I will use this body for attaining moksha; And Bhrthari addresses the five elements and tells that I have intelligently made use of this body; now I am returning the body to you;

I have no ownership of my sharira.

I am merging into Brahman.
This attitude is Nirahamkara.

Sama-dukha-sukha: One who has equipoise.

One who has a shock absorber that absorbs shocks of life; shocks that are like potholes on a road. Gyanam is the shock absorber that absorbs such dukha without trauma to mind. Aham Satyam, Sarvam Mithya.

Everywhere there is vedantic as well as religious method; vedantic method is

too high; in this method; aham satyam; everything else is mithya or dream;
Therefore sukham is dream; dukham is dream; enjoying a poised mind, is the vedantic method but it requires lot of assimilation.

Religious method:

Everything in creation is given by God and is purposeful. Some, I know the purpose, but others I don't know their purpose. Having conviction that God does not create anything without purpose. The more you study, the more you realize everything has a purpose. We have to apply this for sukha dukha pair as well as they are an integral part of creation. Everyone goes through ups and downs; they have their purpose to polish my inner self.

Dukham is a process to improve my inner self. Once I have this conviction, I will receive everything with equanimity.

Kshami: is one

with Kshama, a difficult virtue also known as Titiksha. When I face a situation, I think is unfavorable to me, I try to change it to make it (situation) favorable. This conversion can be in two ways:

1. Violent: Verbal
or even physical to change a situation.
2. Non-violent:

Of the two, violence comes naturally to us. Kshamvan is one who postpones the violent method. He tries to

adopt non-violent method. The more you postpone, the more you have kshama.

While violent method is immediate, effective and quick; and it is easier; its side effects are more damaging.

Then, I avoid violent method. Here victim of violence also becomes violent. A

child in this situation becomes violent when they grow up.

Knowing this, I will

try to adopt violence as a last resort.

Shloka # 14:

12.14 He who is ever content, who is a yogi, who has self-control, who has firm conviction, who has dedicated his mind and intellect to Me-he who is such a devotee of Mine is dear to Me.

Santushtaha:

Inner fullness, both psychologically and intellectually, nothing is lacking. This is Santushtaha; one who is

contented. He has knowledge, Aham Purnaha. Question comes up, if one is

contented, why will one work? How will society prosper? Our answer is that only

contented people contribute to society. A person without contentment will not contribute, as he is selfish.

Life of Gyani is dedicated

to contributing to others' welfare. When is he contented? We also obtain brief

moments of contentedness; but it is transient. Gyani has eternal contentment.

Yogi: means One who is a great Yogi.

It does not mean performing asanas. Yogi means one who has Gyanam. How is Yoga Gyanam? Yuj is the root word of Yoga; meaning combines. **Through knowledge distance between Jivatma and Paramtma is removed.**

This distance is due to ignorance. If god is all-pervading, how can there be a distance from me.

Vaikunta of puranas is our own Atma. The distance is due to my delusion. A

child in mothers lap cries dreaming its mother is lost, but upon waking it

stops. **Yoga is uniting process of Jivatma and paramatma.**

Miraculous power: Gyani need not have miraculous power; he only needs to have wisdom. So

I have told you of four types of people, they are:

Fourth

type: the one who has neither miraculous powers nor knowledge; majority; no siddhi or Gyanam.

Third

type: one who has siddhi but no knowledge is the third variety.

The

second type: has self-knowledge without any miraculous powers.

The First one: the one who has both Gyanam and the siddhi.

Of

these four types, the first one is liberated because he has

got Gyanam; siddhi
is there of course and is a bonus; the second one is also
liberated; because he
or she has Gyanam; without even an iota of siddhi; and the
third one has got all siddhis
without Gyanam;

Gyanam is primary, while
siddhi is an obstacle to moksha. So yogi is with or without
Gyanam.

Yatatma:

Take away:

Qualities of a Gyani are:

Adveshta: Non-hatred

Mitra: A friend

Karuna: Compassion

Nirmamaha: Without
ownership of anything

Nirahamkara: without
ahamkara and mamakara.

Sama-dukha-sukha: Equipose
in all situations

Kshami: One with Kshama

Santushta: Contented

Method of expressing

karuna: One method is praying that I am willing to give
benefit of my prayer to
someone else. The prayer, here, must be sincere.

Identification

with the external world it is called mamakarah.

Identification

with the body-mind-complex is ahamkara.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawad Geeta, Class 159: Chapter 12, Verses 12 & 13

Shloka # 11:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १२.११ ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १२.११ ॥

If you are unable to do even this, in that case, having resorted to the Yoga for Me, thereafter renounce the results of all works by becoming controlled in mind.

Continuing his teachings

Swamiji said, in chapter 12, from shloka # 3 to # 11, Sri Krishna talked about

the five stages of Bhakti Yoga. Bhakti yoga is not a separate Sadhana rather it

is a common name for the five stages of Karma Yoga, Sadhana Yoga and Gyana

Yoga. All five stages, starting with the fifth stage, down to first one, were discussed.

The first stage, described in shloka # 11, is Sakama Karma, the lowest stage of Bhakti Yoga. Here one can be a materialistic person but nevertheless he has to observe two points:

1. Do not adopt immoral methods for material gains. Follow dharmic methods.
2. When you accomplish your material desire and when you are about to enjoy it; before enjoying it, take a moment to say a prayer to God with a proper attitude; this is known as Ishwara Prasada Bhavana.

This itself will start the purification of mind. This Ishwara sambandha will purify the mind. When performed over a long period of time, the mind will mature and your desires will also undergo a change; it will become subtle; it will become a desire to serve others. The most Satvic desire one can have is the desire for knowledge.

Once I graduate to stage two, my desire becomes Nishkama karma, or selfless desire. It should benefit more people and the overall environment I live in. This leads to an expanded mind. It will lead to a Pancha Maha Yagya karma mind. The second stage is Nishkama karma yoga.

The next level, the third stage, is Ishta Devata Upasana Yoga. Mind withdraws from extrovert activities

and becomes more introverted. Then I am ready for Eka Rupa Ishwara Upasana.

Then I come to Nirguna Ishwara Gyanam, the highest stage of Bhakti Yoga. And if I successfully pass through all the five levels of

bhakthi

yoga; I will

become a Brahma Gyani; I will become a sthira pragnaha; I will become an

advaita bhakthaha.

Now Sri Krishna concludes this discussion in shloka # 12.

Shloka # 12:

बुद्धिर्बुद्ध्यात्प्रथमः साधनं ततोऽध्यायः
ततोऽप्यनुसंधानं ततोऽप्युपनिषत्सु
वैदिकेषु ततोऽप्युपनिषत्सु
12.12

Knowledge

is surely superior to practice; meditation surpasses knowledge. The renunciation of the results of works (excels) meditation. From renunciation, Peace follows immediately.

Here Sri Krishna talks of four types of sadhanas. He breaks them down from lowest to highest.

1. Abhyasa
2. Gyanam
3. Dhyanam
4. Karma Phala Tyagam

Abhyasa: means meditation

on God. What type of meditation is it? It

is a meditation that is not backed by knowledge, or knowledge

of God. It is meditation performed out of blind belief. One meditates upon any chosen deity such as Rama, Krishna or any other form. It is known as Knowledge-less meditation.

Gyanam: By thorough study of scriptures one knows what God is. Here the knowledge is obtained without practice of meditation upon god, to internalize the knowledge. So, meditation-less knowledge is Gyanam.

Dhyanam: It is a combination of both above; one who has understood scriptures and then dwells upon god. It is meditation with knowledge.

Karmaphala Tyagaha: Sri Krishna talked about this topic in Shloka # 11 as well. Here one dedicates all Karma phala's to god and takes back Ishwara prasadam. This Sadhana was there in the previous list of five sadhanas as the lowest one. But here Sri Krishna places it as highest one, in this list of four. He openly contradicts the previous shloka.

Shankaracharya says, it is an open contradiction; but Sri Krishna's intention is that while Karma phala thyaga is lowest step; unfortunately, most people are ready only for this lowest level alone. We are still materialistic people. We are ready for this stage only. Sri Krishna does not want to give such people an

inferiority

complex. Hence he is saying something like the phrase "small is beautiful"; so

he glorifies this sadhana. This whole shloka is called Arthavada Shloka, which means

exaggerating

the value of a sadhana to encourage the people to practice that value.

Of the four sadhanas:

1. Lowest is abhyasa; a mechanical meditation.
2. Gyanam: is better than Abyasa Yoga. Meditation-less knowledge is better than Knowledge-less Meditation.
3. Dhyanam: Meditation practiced after gaining knowledge, is superior to Gyanam.
4. Karma Phala Thyaga: is better than all three above, although it is lowest in list of previous five sadhanas. This ranking is meant to encourage people to practice Sakama Karmas.

What will Karma Phala

Thyaga lead to? Dedicating fruits of effort to God is an acknowledgement;

Nivedanam, informing God, that everything is due to his grace; this awareness

is karmaphala thyaga. Whatever phalas I get, I accept it as Ishwara Prasada.

The word Prasada in

Sanskrit means tranquility of mind. If every experience is a

prasada in my mind, I will have no resistance to the experience. I give up resistance, hence called Thyagaha. This leads to shanti. With this Bhakti Yoga Sadhanas are over.

First part of chapter one is over as well.

Second part of Chapter one is from Shloka # 13 to the end.

Shloka # 13:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १२.१३ ॥

He who is not hateful towards any creature, who is friendly and compassionate, who has no idea of 'mine' and the idea of egoism, who is the same under sorrow and happiness, who is forgiving;

Say a person goes through all five stages of Bhakti yoga successfully; how long will it take? Swamiji says, it depends on the person; it may take one life or several lives; he then becomes a Gyani or a Parabahkta or the highest bahkta. He has Gyanam because he reached the fifth stage. He knows Eka Rupa, Vishwa Rupa and finally Arupa Ishwara. Once he knows Arupa Ishwara, he knows that he is not a subject, rather he realizes that, " I am He, Soham".

He realizes that God is non-different from me; that, he is an Advaita Gyani. He realizes Paramatma and Jivatma are not different; they are just one word used for the same entity;

like wave and ocean are names of water; there is no substance known as wave or ocean; it is all water. So, he is highest Bhakta, an Advaita Gyani. He is called Sthita Pragyaha; one who has conviction regarding Advaita Gyanam.

How does such an Advaita Gyani face different situations in life? How does he respond? This is known as Parabhakta Lakshanani. Sri Krishna talks on this subject. Why does he talk about it?

It is a marketing tool used by Sri Krishna.

The first benefit is, once I know the benefit of this knowledge; I will be tempted to follow the Sadhana.

Then the second benefit is; whatever are the natural traits of the Gyani; they should become a sadhana for me, to be deliberately practiced. Whatever is a natural trait of a realized person; I should take them as a sadhana to be deliberately practiced.

So whatever be his natural trait, they should be taken as a list of sadhanas, which I should deliberately and gradually practice. Therefore, we can take this as a list of virtues to be cultivated. And from this we come to know another important thing also; and that is, when a person practices spiritual sadhana and attains

liberation; he is going to survive in this world.

So

moksha is not a

benefit, which is promised after death. So Krishna

makes it very clear; moksha is a state of

mind, that you will enjoy while you are living in this world.

And therefore our

moksha is called jivan mukthi;

therefore the description that we get is jivan mukthihi; jivan

muktha lakshanani; sthira prajnana lakshanani; para

bhaktha lakshanani, is the

topic now.

And

this is from this thirteen shloka to the 19th shloka and 20th

shloka is the

conclusion.

Traits of a Gyani:

How do I know if I am a

Gyani? You can check for these traits in a Gyani.

First Virtue: Non-hatred (Adveshta)

He does not hate any being in universe; he has

freedom from hatred. See, how many people you hate, and you

will know your

status. So

we should ask do I hate anyone; Not anyone? We have got a very

big list;

starting from neighbor onwards; there is a very big list;

bigger the list;

farther from moksha I am;

There is an interesting phenomenon, whenever the shastra says:

you should not hate anyone; our first immediate reaction is we

try to justify our hatred; so we give a big description of the

person; and what all negative traits he has got; what all akramas he is doing; Swamiji that is why I am hating; they expect Swamiji to OK that person deserves hatred. So according to shastras there is no such thing called justified or justifiable hatred, any form of hatred is unjustifiable. And why do we say so; because according to shastra; every person is intrinsically a good divine and pure person. There is no impure person in the world; there is no evil character in the world; every single jeevatma is essentially none other than suddha paramatma; therefore nobody deserves hatred. No person deserves hatred; because every person is a Saint; the worst sinner is also a saint.

A person's actions maybe corrupt, although he is pure. Can we hate actions of a person? Shankaracharya says, even wrong action or behavior of a person does not deserve hatred. **Hatred is not a remedy for misbehavior.**

No action or character can be enhanced by hatred. **Neither a person nor his behavior deserves hatred. Hatred is an utterly useless tendency.**

Further, hatred damages the mind of the hater. It corrodes the mind.

Shastra's say every person deserves love; misbehavior deserves an appropriate response.

What is the response?

Hatred is not the right response. Shastra's suggest using Sama (education), Dana, Bheda and Danda. Even application of Danda should be performed with love alone and not hatred.

Is it possible to give Danda with love? Shastra's say even punishment can be given with love. Citing an example: a mother

beating her child, even here, the mother can't hate her child. So misbehavior requires appropriate action with love. Therefore, even Sri Krishna may choose to destroy kamsa; and He may ask Arjuna to destroy Duryodhana. Therefore whatever appropriate action is to be taken we should take; but the advice is, it should not be motivated by hatred; but it must be motivated by love and to change or correct the person. Freedom from hatred is the first trait of a Gyani.

Take away:

Bhakti Yoga is not a particular Sadhana; rather it is a range of sadhanas that everyone has to go through.

On hatred:

First virtue of a saint is
Non-hatred (Advashata)

Hatred is not a remedy for
misbehavior.

Neither a person nor his
behavior deserves hatred. Hatred is an utterly useless
tendency.

Shastras say every person
deserves love; misbehavior deserves an appropriate response.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Baghawad Geeta, Class 158: Chapter 12, Verses 9 – 11

Shloka # 9:

If, however, you are unable to establish the mind steadily on Me, then, O Dhananjaya, seek to attain Me through the Yoga of Practice.

Continuing his teachings

Swamiji said, by the way of answering Arjuna's question Sri Krishna is teaching

us Bhakti Yoga. Bhakti Yoga is not a particular Sadhana; rather it is a range

of sadhanas that everyone has to go through. The range of Sadhanas are

presented at five levels and completion of all levels ensures one's moksha. In

this chapter all five levels are presented, hence importance of the chapter.

While dealing with the five levels Sri Krishna starts from the highest level

and then descends to lower levels. If a person is not ready at the fifth level,

the highest level, then he can go to the fourth level and so on, down to first.

Fifth level is the step that leads to liberation; Gyana Yoga sadhana is also

known as Akshara Upasana in this chapter; this upasana which is, same as Gyana

yoga, consists of sravanam, mananam and nidhidhyasanam. Thus, Gyana Yoga is

name of Bhakti Yoga at the highest level.

Shankaracharya confirms

this in Viveka chudamani as well. Bhakthi is the final stage of liberation; and in the final stage; bhakthi is defined as self-enquiry; Brahman enquiry; nirguna Ishvara vicharah. And Sri Krishna himself admitted that this Gyana yoga form of bhakthi yoga is not easy for the majority and they need not feel bad about it; let them try the fourth step and the fourth level of bhakthi yoga was discussed in shlokas No.6, 7 and 8.

For such persons, he advises going to fourth level, that is Saguna Ishwara Upasana, as Nirguna Upasana is difficult for an unprepared mind. This Saguna Ishwara is Vishwarupa Ishwara. The eight faceted Ishwara, Ashtamurthy, is Vishwa rupa Ishwara. The eight facets are: The five elements, the Pancha Bhutas, Surya (stars), Chandra (planets) and all Jiva Rashis. This is the Ashtamurthy or Virat Ishwara or Vishwa. May you learn to meditate on such an Ishwara.

If the mind is not subtle enough to conceive the Vishwa Rupa Ishwara, do not feel bad; come down one more level. Instead of Vishwa Rupa Ishwara we can choose a personal God. In our religion, we have many personal gods to choose from. You have gods who are in human form, animal, tree or even a mixture of forms, such as Narasimha etc. We have puranas that describe these gods. We have 36 puranas; 18 puranams and 18 upa puranams; They will give the description of eka rupa Isvara, which includes their body; how many hands they have; how many heads they have; and how many weapons they wield; what type of dress they wear; all these are there; Choose an Ishta devatha, and then practice ishta devatha upasana; otherwise called eka rupa upasana; which Sri Krishna calls abhyasa yoga.

This third step was discussed
in Shloka # 9.

If you are unable to focus mind on Vishwa Rupa Sadhana; if you have strong Raga Dvesha; mind will dwell on objects of attachments and hatreds. Such a mind can't enjoy nature, as it is a narrow mind. In such a situation nothing wrong in taking to abhyasa yoga; and if you cannot love a personal God; we have got mantra, yantra, tantra; thus, we have, shree chakra; it is not a person but a symbol which you can visualize; we have got surya devatha, which is not a person, but a symbol, which is called pratika upasana. Either a prathima upasana or pratika upasana; prathima means God as a person with limbs like you and mine; that is called anthropomorphism; anthropomorphism means visualising God as a human being; like you and I. Our weaknesses are also attributed to God; this is called anthropomorphic approach to Lord; which is also acceptable; and in Gita it is called abhyasa yoga.

May you strive to reach Me.

May you strive to attain Moksha. Can one get moksha through
Ishta Devata

Upasana? Answer is both yes and no. No, one can't directly get
liberation; yes,

one can indirectly obtain moksha. Thus Ishta Devata Upasana
will lead to Vishwa

Rupa Upasana; rather Ishta Devata Upasana will lift you to
Vishwa Rupa Upasana;

Vishwa rupa Upasana will eventually lift you to Nirguna
Upasana and then on to Moksha.

So, it is a parampara karanam for moksha.

Therefore, Arjuna, come to
Ishta Devata Upasana.

Suppose a person says O Krishna I am not fit for eka rupa
upasana also, because upasana is a mental activity. Upasana is
visualizing the Lord within myself; purely with the help of

the mind; Upasana is defined as manasam karma; which means the physical body has to be passive; this is the technical definition; many people define puja as upasana. Remember physical puja cannot be called upasana, because upasana by definition is manasam karma. I should be seated in a place; I should not use any of my Gyanendriyas or karmendriyas, I have to withdraw all my sense organs and it should be, a purely mental activity; which means a person should not be an extrovert person. Upasana is possible only when a person is ready to withdraw the mind away from the external world, make it antharmukham; turn inwards and within my heart, I should be able to visualize my iShta devatha.

And therefore, if a person is extrovert; if a person is rajo guna pradhana; that person will find it difficult, even to sit in a place for five minutes when one has to meditate. Even to sit in a place for five minutes, a rajasic person will find extremely difficult; because he is an embodiment of dynamism and therefore he wants to be active. And therefore Sri Krishna, I am not ready for meditation; and if I do meditation, I will end up as 'mad'. For a restless person, sitting quiet is extremely difficult, that is why many people after retirement get into lot of problems. Not only problem for themselves; the primary sufferer is the wife and family. Generally she recommends take up another job; if you leave me it is OK, because it is extremely difficult.

So, I am not ready for meditation. In that case come down to Step # 2; come to karma or life of activity. This is described in next shloka.

Shloka # 10:

If you are unable even to practise, be intent on works for Me. By undertaking works for Me as well, you will attain perfection. [Identity with Brahman.]

O Arjuna, if you are unfit for Abhyasa Yoga as well (Eka Rupa Upasana) then may you be committed to a life of activity. There are two types of activity: 1) Nishkama Karma; serving society; taking to Pancha Maha Yagna. And 2) Sakama Karma.

Nishkama karma: To serve humanity look at nature; how a river flows down; how trees give fruits, how cows give milk; thus in nature there is more giving and less taking. Therefore, may you be, like a Vrikshaha (tree); standing in the hot sun, the tree gives shade, they give fruits, they give everything expecting nothing; every tree is like a mahatma; So, it is a life dedicated to others. So, make your life one of contribution and do so with proper attitude. Look at society as Ishwara. Be selflessly active. Be a Nishkama karma performer. Lead a life of service. You will certainly attain liberation.

How will you attain liberation? It is an indirect way to liberation; it will lead to eka rupa upasana; it will then lead to aneka rupa upasana; then to gyana yoga and eventually to moksha. Therefore, Arjuna, take to a life of Nishkama Karma.

If one says, I can't commit to nishkama karma as I still have countless desires; I still have to fulfill my duties;

How, then, can I come to

nishkama karma?

Sri Krishna says, Ok, have your personal desires; nothing wrong in fulfilling your duties as a family person; then perform Sakama Karmas. Vedas do prescribe Sakama Karmas. Reality is that, unfulfilled desires can obstruct your spiritual path when you perform other Upasanas. So fulfill your desires. So, be committed to Sakama Karma yoga. If so, How to perform this yoga? This is the lowest step.

Shloka # 11:

If you are unable to do even this, in that case, having resorted to the Yoga for Me, thereafter renounce the results of all works by becoming controlled in mind.

If you can't perform Nishkama Karma, serving society, serve yourself.

So Sri Krishna says; if you are not able to commit yourselves to serving others; serving the society; by taking to Ishvara-arpana buddhi; as Ishvara-arpanam; by taking to that attitude; if you are not able to do that; then may you take to sakama karma.

Shankarcharya says, in rare cases even Nishidha karmas are allowed such as animal sacrifice to god; it even allows use of alcohol. How to perform this karma; it is sakama karma, selfish activity, expecting worldly benefits and personal benefit. Here, dedicate sakama karma as Ishwara Arpanam. Take the phalam as your own result and enjoy. But when you are enjoying the benefit, don't call it your

benefit; call it

Ishwara Prasadam; hence, the reason, children are named Ram Prasad, Krishna

Prasad etc; with this, even a selfish action purifies the mind. Even a house

you built for yourself; look upon that house as Lord's house.

Install God in the

house; dedicate house to God; " say, "permit me to live in your temple". I am

living in temple of god. This fulfills your personal desire at the same time kama

karma purifies your mind. So you are under care of Lord.

In

fact, that house will be a pure house free from all forms of inauspiciousness; therefore

it becomes Lord's house; it becomes Lord's responsibility to drive away all the

evil forces and therefore you are living under the care of the Lord. So this

life style is called sakama

karma pradhana karma yoga.

Therefore

Sri Krishna says, dedicate the result of all the karmas, which includes kama karmas and

which includes the inevitable nishidha karmas; like when you are cleaning

the house, by using insecticide etc. Certainly himsa is involved; you are doing

himsa; for keeping up the house; And there will be inevitable papam; they are

called soona; soona means inevitable papams, to be done by a grihastha and even if such papams are there;

nishidha karmas are

there; even those nishidha

karmas will not affect you, when they are offered to the Lord.

They will only
purify you.

If I do this karma yoga, I
will graduate to second step of nishkama karma yoga; where
world of glamor will
not appeal anymore; material desire will be replaced by
spiritual desires. This
is called maturity. Once kama comes down, I will get Chitta
Shudhi and then I
continue on to Eka Rupa, then Aneka rupa and finally Gyana
yoga.

This is lowest level of
bhakti. If one says, I can't even practice this, then better
luck in next
birth. With this all five stages have been discussed. All five
together are
known as Bhakti Yoga. If a person is born advanced; he can go
to Gyana Yoga
directly; because they have gone through those Upasanas in
previous lives,
other wise one has to start at level # 1.

Take away:

Bhakti Yoga is not a
particular Sadhana; rather it is a range of sadhanas that
everyone has to go
through.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Mandukya Upanishad, Class 34

Karika

4: ghaṭādiṣu pralīneṣu ghaṭākāśādayo yathā |
ākāśe saṃpralīyante tadvajjīvā ihātmani || 4 ||

4. As

on the destruction of the pot, etc., the ether enclosed in the pot,

etc., merges in the Ākāśa (the great expanse of ether), similarly

the Jīvas merge in the Ātman.

Greetings All,

Recapping his teaching of

Karika # 4, Swami Paramarthananda said, Gaudapada wants to explain the word

Advaitam as described for Turiyam in mantra # 7. Turiyam is Karya Karana

Vilakshanam. Here Karyam means effect while Karanam is cause.

Karyam is Dvaitam;

Karanam is potential dvaitam; hence Advaitam must be karya karana Vilakshanam.

Gaudapada wants to establish that Turiyam Brahma is not karanam at all. He

wants to show that no creation has come out of Turiyam.

Here Turiyam means Jiva and

Jagat. So, he wants to show each, Jiva and Jagat, both are not created from

Brahman.

The idea that:

Jiva is born from Pramatma;

and Jagat is born out of Paramatma is negated.

Karikas # 3-#9: Shows Jivatma is not born.

Karika # 10: Shows Jagat is not born.

Later scriptural texts also establish the same.

Of the four steps we are in step # 1.

To convey the idea that jivatma is not born, idea of pot space is used. Pot space birth is only a seeming birth. Similarly, Atma is one and same; when it is all pervading it is called Paramatma; and same Paramatma enclosed in body is re-named Jivatma. So, Jivatma is seemingly born and when body is gone, Jivatma is seemingly gone. In this regard five misconceptions were discussed.

1. Origination of Jivatma
2. Disappearance of jivatma.
3. Various Doshahas.
4. Visheshaha:
individuality of Jivatma indicated through; I am Brahmana, I am Sanyasi etc;
all indicating individuality.
5. Relationship between Jivatma and paramatma: **Reality is that they are not different.**
Jivatma is Paramatma and Paramatma is Jivatma.

All above five misconceptions can be understood through pot space analogy. Creation, destruction, pollution, individuality (I am big pot space) and

relationship of
pot space to total space, are all, misconceptions.

Karika # 3

was about misconception of origination of Pot space.

Karika # 4

was about misconception about destruction of pot space. Space can't be destroyed, cut, wet etc. Even merger of pot space into total space, no such event ever occurs. We wrongly call it pot space merger. Reality is that when pot space was destroyed, I withdrew the word pot. Thus, change is not in space, it is only in my mouth. Similarly for a Gyani, when we withdraw the word Jivatma, it is not a merger, another misconception. Sunrise and sun set are all words that are common misconceptions and yet no one questions them.

Karika # 5:

yathaikasminghāṭākāśe

rajodhūmādibhiryute |

na sarve samprayujyante tadvajjīvāḥ sukhādibhiḥ || 5 ||

5. As any portion of Ākāśa enclosed in a pot being soiled by dust, smoke, etc., all such other portions of Ākāśa enclosed in other pots are not soiled, so is the happiness, etc., of the Jīvas, i.e., the happiness, misery, etc., of one Jīva do not affect other Jīvas.

Pollution is

misconception # 3. Gaudapada talks of misconception # 3, that leads to other

misconceptions.

When a pot is dirty, people think pot space is polluted; foul smell of pot belongs to air, space does not have impurity or foul smell; we transfer the impurity from pot to space and thus commit a mistake.

Another pot has fragrance. Here people say fragrance belongs to pot space, while I say it belongs to the pot. Thus I conclude one pot has foul smell while another has fragrance. So, I think pot space has attributes; thus pot space # 1 has bad attribute and so I think it is bad; while Pot space # 2 has good attribute; so I think it is good. This analogy extends to Jivatma; thus some jivatmas are considered good with good attributes; some are Duratmas with bad attributes; then there are also mahatmas. So, we think there are different types of atmas.

Sankhya philosophers say that in Advaita all jivatmas are one and same; hence when one jivatma has sorrow, all jivatmas also experience sorrow. But in reality when we see one jivatma in sorrow, others may not be sorrowful. Gaudapada says, the fact that one jivatma is sorrowful itself is a wrong conception; sorrow is an attribute of anatma (mind) and not atma. Minds pollution is sorrow. This is a misconception.

In example
of pot space, when one pot space is polluted it does not mean
all pot spaces
are polluted. Pollution belongs to pot
and air but not of space. So, there is only one all pervading
space.

Karika # 5

description: When pot space is polluted with dust, smoke all
other pot spaces
are not contaminated, why? Not because spaces are many and are
different, but
because the one pot space is not really contaminated. In same
way even when one
jivatma is polluted with papa, other jivatmas are not
polluted. Reality is that
the one and only atma, present in all bodies, is not polluted.
Gaudapada says
Jivatma's is not polluted by happiness as well. Happiness, a
temporary
experience happening in our mind, is seen as pollution by
Vedanta; as such it
is considered potential sorrow. Gita chapter # 18 says
happiness and pleasure
will lead to sorrow, as everything is cyclic. Vedanta sees
worldly pleasures as
pollution.

Until

we see atmananda, we are allowed to enjoy dharmic pleasures,
although, even
there, it is still a pollution. Sukha, Dukha and Moha are all
pollutions of
mind, not of atma, while Atmananda is nirguna chaitanyam. With
this the third
misconception that jivatma is associated with impurity is
over.

Karika # 6:

rūpakāryasamākhyāśca

bhidyante tatra tatra vai |

ākāśasya na bhedo'sti tadvajjīveṣunirṇayaḥ || 6 ||

6. *Though*

form, function and name are different here and there yet this does

not imply any difference in the Ākāśa (which is one). The same is

the conclusion (truth) with regard to the Jīvas.

Fourth

misconception is that pot space has individuality; that there is difference

between room space, kitchen space and headspace. Individuality has three fold

attributes of:

1. Nama
2. Rupa and
3. Karma.

Nama:

such as pot space, headspace, stomach space etc are different namas.

Rupam:

Shape and volume. Room space is small; I need bigger house space; space is

inside room; inside house etc. Vedanta says, there is no "space within room" or

" space outside room"; all these are wrong expressions. "All rooms are within

one indivisible space." Even walls are within space. Adjective small, big etc

are misconceptions. Thus, we give individuality through use of adjectives. Thus

we say, this Jivatma is a papi, while another is gyani. **All attributes belong to either Sthula, sukshma and Karana shariras only. No attribute belongs to Jivatma.**

Rupa:

Differences in forms are due to function; such as pot space has a function, room space has another function etc. Namas: are also different indicating pot space, small space, large space etc.

All

these differences don't belong to space at all. There is no difference in space. It does not do anything; does not function at all. Similarly, the one paramatma is misconceived as different Jivatmas. How to become paramatma? Someone said one could remove it by scrubbing the atma. Here the only impurity is the misconception that I am impure. Accept you are, you were and will always be the one and only paramatma. The fourth misconception is complete.

Karika # 7:

nā"kāśasya

ghaṭākāśo vikārāvayavau yathā |

naivā"tmanaḥ sadā jīvo vikārāvayavau tathā || 7 ||

7. As the Ghaṭākāśa (i.e., the ether portioned off by the pot) is neither the (evolved) effect nor part of the Ākāśa (ether), so is the Jīva (the embodied being) neither the effect nor part of the Ātman.

The

fifth misconception: here Gaudapada talks of relationship between jivatma and paramatma, a very important philosophical relationship. All different philosophies such as Yoga, and Sankhya raise this question but Gaudapada says all philosophies reach the wrong conclusion. Some say Paramatma is creator and Jivatma is created, thus there is a karya karana sambandha. Another concept is jivatma is a part of paramatma, a part and whole relationship, known as Vishishta advaita. Paramatma is big consciousness while jivatma is small consciousness. Gaudapada says this also is wrong just like in pot space and total space relationship. One says pot space is product of total space. Reality is that there is no pot space created; only a pot is created. So, here karya karana sambandha is the misconception.

A second group argues that pot space is a part of total space, or so it seems. What is definition of pot space? Pot space is space inside pot. **Vedanta says space is not within pot rather pot is obtaining within space. In total space many pots are born and many die as well.**

Another idea is pot space is a part of total space; this true only if space can have parts and it can be assembled and dis-assembled. Thus, pillar is a part of a hall and it can be disassembled. In reality we can't say this of space, as

total space can't be assembled or disassembled and hence pot space can't be cut out of total space. Space is part-less (without parts); this is reality.

Karika

7: Pot space is not a product of total space or a part of total space as well. In the same way, Jivatma is never born; I am never a product or part of Paramatma.

Swamiji reiterated that these are all very important Karikas.

Therefore Jivatma is not born out of paramatma.

Therefore, paramatma is not karanam of Jivatma.

Therefore, paramatma is Turiyam karya karana Vilakshana Advaitam.

Karika # 8:

yathā

bhavati bālānāṃ gaganāṃ malinaṃ malaiḥ |
tathā bhavatyabuddhānāmātmā'pi malino malaiḥ || 8 ||

8. As the ether appears to the ignorant children to be soiled by dirt, similarly, the Ātman also is regarded by the ignorant as soiled.

This karika can also be read with the karika # 5 where Gaudapada made a compromising statement. There, he said, even when one space is polluted, all other pot spaces are not polluted.

Here, he seems to agree that pot space can be polluted.

This, now, he wants to change. He says this view is from point of view of an ignorant person, an Agyani. Reality is that pot space is not really polluted. Foul smell belongs to pot, not space.

Similarly the jivatma is seen as polluted by an Agyani. Truth is, pollution belongs to container and it is transferred to space wrongly.

Similar example is when train reaches Madras we say Madras has arrived; movement of train has been falsely been transferred to the place, Madras. This is called superimposition while Shankaracharya calls it Adhyabhasha.

All problems that I claim for myself are the false transfer of problems belonging to object that I am transferring to subject. Thus while watching a movie the sorrow of hero is transferred to me. In the same way, only an Agyani, jivatma appears to be contaminated with kama, krodha, Raga, Dvesha etc. Reality is that all jivatmas are shudha paramatma alone, Tat Tvam Asi.

Take Away:

1. Reality is that they are not different. Jivatma is Paramatma and Paramatma is Jivatma.
2. All attributes belong to either Sthula, sukshma and Karana shariras only. No attribute belongs to Jivatma.
3. Vedanta says space is not within pot rather pot is obtaining within

space. In total space
many pots are born and many die as well.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy

Mandukya Upanishad, Class 33

Karika # 1:

upāsanāśrito
dharmo jāte brahmaṇi vartate |
prāgutpatterajaṃ sarvaṃ tenāsau kṛpaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ || 1

*1. The Jīva betaking itself to devotion (upāsanā) thinks itself to be related to the Brahman that is supposed to have manifested Himself
He is said to be of narrow intellect because he thinks that before creation all was of the nature of the unborn (Reality).*

Continuing his teaching Swami Paramarthananda said, in the first two karikas Gaudapada introduces the subject matter. He says Pada Trayam should be equated to Dvaitam or Duality. In all three Padas duality is there, either in manifest form or as unmanifest. This Pada Trayam exists as Karya (pada's 1 and 2) Karana (third pada) Rupam.

Thus, five attributes of PadaTrayam are: Pada Trayam=Dvaitam=Karya Karana Rupam = Savikaram=Karpanyam.

Karana modifies to Karya. Wherever modification is there; time is involved and thus Yama is involved. Therefore mortality is involved and separation is involved, whenever time comes in. This misery experienced through old age, death etc is known as Karpanyam. You can't stop old age or death; this helplessly being victim of time is Karpanyam or Samsara.

Turiyam also has similar five attributes; only they are opposite ones. Thus:

Turiyam=Advaitam=Karya karana
Vilakshanam=Nirivikaram=A-Karpanyam=A-Samsaram.

In karika # 1, the first five attributes related to Pada Trayam are described.

In karika # 2, the second five attributes related to Turiyam are described.

You can choose which way you wish to take; misery or moksha; it is all your choice. Gaudapada says, I assume students of Vedanta are interested in Turiyam and therefore I shall deal with it in this chapter; hence chapter is called Advaita Prakaranam. Chapter can be called by any of the names of the five attributes of Turiyam. The name Advaita Prakaranam is also used as it is mentioned in Mantra # 7 as well.

Karika # 1:

Every person in duality is miserable. Even exalted duality won't free him from misery. God is meditated upon and I am the meditator; even here there is

duality. Religion is great only in Advaita Gyanam. If it does not go to advaitam, then you are religiously unfortunate, says Gaudapada.

Karika # 2:

ato

**vakṣyāmyakārpaṇyamajāti samatāṃ gatam |
yathā na jāyate kiṃcit jāyamānaṃ samantataḥ || 2 ||**

2. Therefore

I shall now describe that (Brahman) which is free from limitations, unborn and which is the same throughout; and from this, one understands that it is not (in reality) born though it appears to be manifested everywhere.

Therefore, since Pada Trayam falls within Samsara, I shall teach Turiya Padam of Atma based on mantra # 7.

Turiyam is without Akarpanyam (where there is no tyranny of time) or Samsara (free Turiyam) or it is misery-less Turiyam.

Ajati means Karya Karana

Vilakshanam, where there is no birth or creation. Jati here means birth; hence

this teaching of Mandukya Upanishad is called Ajati Vada meaning beyond Karya

Karana.

Nirvikaram means ever the

same; even while body is ever changing and mind is also changing; Turiyam alone

is Saman. I will teach you how nothing is born out of Turiyam; it is not a Karanam;

and hence it is Karya Karana Vilakshanam. Even though there is

appearance of
Creation (things being born continuously and then die); I will
show you it is
not real, it is all just an appearance; just as in a dream,
everything is just
an appearance; as on waking, everything disappears. Therefore,
Turiyam is not a
Karanam.

Karika # 3:

ātmā

**hyākāśavajjīvaīrghaṭākāśairivoditaḥ |
ghaṭādivacca saṃghātaīrjātāvetannidarśanam || 3 ||**

3.

***Ātman may be said to be similar to Ākāśa (ether) manifested
in the forms of the Jīvas (embodied selves) which may be
compared
to the ether enclosed in pots. Again, as pots, etc., are said
to be
produced from the Ākāśa (ether), similarly (gross) bodies are
said
to be evolved from the Ātman. This is the illustration of the
manifestation (from Brahman, if any).***

Now we enter the main teaching. Gudapada makes a grand
beginning. He wants to show Turiyam is Karya Karana
Vilakshanam. He will concentrate on “ Karana” Vilakshanam.
Karana Vilakshanam means, Turiyam is not cause of anything and
no creation is born out of Turiyam. For convenience of
analysis Turiyam is divided into two parts:

- 1) Jiva, as Chetana amsha;
- 2) Jagat, as Achetana amsha.

Gaudapada says, Jiva is not
born of Turiyam; neither is Jagat. He teaches this in four

stages.

Stage # 1: Logical negation of creation of Jiva. He proves Jiva is not born out of Turiyam.

Stage # 2: Logical negation of Jagat Srishti or creation of world.

3. Stage # 3: Scriptural negation of Jiva Srishti. He says Jiva is never created.

4. Stage # 4: Scriptural negation of Creation of world.

Following is also a breakdown of karikas by the above said four stages:

Karika 3-9: First stage

Karika 10: Second stage.

Karika 11-14: Third stage

Karika 15-30: Fourth stage.

Stage # 1:

Jivatma and paramatma (Turiyam) do not have Karya Karana sambandha. Jivatma is not born out of Paramatma.

Karya Karana Sambandha is a popular mistake; hence the misconception that I am Jivatma and Paramatma has created me; and I have to go back to Paramatma.

To reveal the fact that they don't have any sambandha, Gaudapada uses scriptural examples.

Akasha Drishtanta: One space is called both Pot space and Other space. Pot space is

enclosed in a pot, while other space is all pervading space, maha akasha or Total space.

Thus in above example:

Pot space is like Jivatma.

Total space is like Paramatma.

Gaudapada wants to study both. If you look superficially at both spaces, you will get certain ideas; but upon enquiry you will find them false.

First misconception: Utpatti (origination): So the first false idea is that pot space is born out of Total space. Reality is pot space is never born; when pot is born, there is already space and the enclosed space is just given a new name called pot space. This name comes only after creation of pot. **So the birth of container pot is falsely transferred to birth-less space.** This is called Utpatti or misconception.

Similarly when building a house, is house the name of the space or the name of the walls? Since you live in space, house is name of space you live in, while reality is, that you build a wall and transfer its name to space.

Similarly, what is a well? It is name of space that contains water. Reality is, nobody makes a well. You just remove mud; then you transfer the name and say a well was made.

Similarly, when you travel to Madras and arrive at Basin Bridge Junction, you say, Madras has arrived; reality is that arrival of train is transferred to Madras. Madras never came. So, also, Akasha (space) is never born.

Second misconception: Nashaha: When pot is broken; you say, pot space is gone; while reality is that, that space is not gone; it is just that the pot broke.

Third misconception: Doshaha: Pollution: Various things in space are polluted, such as air, water, earth etc. Our mistake is that we consider pollution of things as "Space Pollution". Reality is that Space never gets polluted.

Fourth misconception: Individuality: Viseshaha: Every Jivatma is associated with individuality; thus smaller pot space, bigger pot space etc are based upon attributes of container. Attribute of container is transferred to space and it makes it big or small space etc.

Fifth misconception: Sambandhaha: That pot space and total space are related, is the misconception. Reality is, there is only one individual space. We divide total space and create names like pot space etc. This is the false relationship; the idea that pot space is a product while total space is the producer. We create this Karya Karana Sambandha. Reality is that space was never created; it was always there. So Sambandha is the fifth misconception.

None of the above

misconceptions exist. These misconceptions can also be extended to the Jivatama.

Thus:

1. Jivatma is never born. Atma is consciousness. I am enclosed consciousness. Birth is of container and not content; therefore, Jivatma appears to have birth.
2. Jivatma dies, is another misconception. I am never going to die. Enclosed body may die but enclosed consciousness never dies.
3. I may have several doshas, is another misconception. Gaudapada says, "You have no doshsa". Doshas belong to container, the body. None of doshas belong to Consciousness.
4. I have individuality is another misconception. I do not have individuality. Individuality belongs to container. The content is beyond individuality.
5. I think I am Jivatma born out of Paramatma. Reality is that I am consciousness and I am never born out of Paramtma. We are just two names of the same consciousness. Inside enclosure is Jivatma; outside enclosure is Paramatma. It is like a demarcation line, say between the states of Tamil nadu and Karnataka; it is just a man made line. It is just a name we give to continuous space. In reality there is no demarcation between states.

So

relationship between Jivatma and Paramatma is an Aikya Sambandha (meaning no sambandha). I am Turiyam. So Jivatma is not born out of Paramatma.

Karika # 3: Here

Atma (turiyam) is compared to Akasha.

Paramatma is

seemingly born as Jivatma; like total space is seemingly born as pot space, while reality is that only container is born, not content, the consciousness.

Paramatma is

also seemingly born as the container, the body; however, this topic Gaudapada will discuss later on.

How

can we say that Total space is born as pot space? Only clay is born as pot.

Taittiriya Upanishad says: from Akasha, Vayu is born; From Vayu, Agni is born; from Agni, water is born; from Water, Earth is born, from Earth, pot is born.

So total space has produced pot. Similarly, Paramatma is born as Jivatma, as well as pot. This space analogy is the seeming creation of Jivatma.

Karika # 4:

ghaṭādiṣu

pralīneṣu ghaṭākāśādayo yathā |

ākāśe sampralīyante tadvajjīvā ihātmani || 4 ||

4. As

*on the destruction of the pot, etc., the ether enclosed in the pot,
etc., merges in the Ākāśa (the great expanse of ether),
similarly
the Jīvas merge in the Ātman.*

In
previous karikas misconceptions of origination or Utpatti was
explained. Now
Gaudapada talks of Jivatma Nashaha; when the container
resolves; when pot,
room, etc perish; the pot space also seemingly merges into
total space; and
when pot space breaks, it merges into total space. Reality is
that pot was
destroyed and nothing happened to space. Similarly, we say
Gyani merged into
Brahman; it is only usage of a verb; nothing really happened.

In
the same manner, enclosed consciousness, Jivatma, merges into
Paramatma, a
seeming merger. Reality is that there is no question of any
merger at all. So, Vedanta
students wrongly ask, will I merge into God?

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy

Bhavad Gita, Class 157:

Chapter 12, Verses 5 to 9

Shloka # 5:

**For them who have their minds attached to the
Unmanifested the struggle is greater; for, the Goal, which is
the Unmanifest,
is attained with difficulty by the embodied ones.**

Continuing his teachings Swamiji said, I had pointed out that in Ch. 12 Sri Krishna is presenting Bhakti Yoga in five levels. The fifth level is nothing but Gyana Yoga; as such Gyana yoga is the highest level of Bhakti Yoga and here the Lord is worshipped as Nirguna Brahman. Worship of nirguna Brahman is unique; it is not a physical worship of asanam samarpayami; argyam samarpayami, padyam samarpayami, etc. because for nirgunam Brahma where is the question of argyam, padyam, etc. Argyam means water for washing the hands; Padyam means water for washing the feet; Achamaniyam, water for washing the mouth. And nirguna Isvara does not have hands, does not have feet; does not have the mouth; where is the question of argya, padya achamaniyadi.

And

therefore worship is in the form of the very study about Nirgunam Brahma; the very enquiry is a form of worship; the enquiry consisting of shravana, mananam and nidhidhyasanam; systematic study, gaining the knowledge; converting it into conviction, and assimilating this wisdom; that alone is the puja and what I am offering is, offering my ignorance into the fire of knowledge; and therefore Gyana yoga itself is the form of worship I have to practice.

Sri Krishna presents this

Gyana Yoga form of worship, in shlokas # 3, # 4 and # 5 respectively.

Sri Krishna used the word Akshara Upasana. It means Nirguna Ishwara upasana consisting of sravana, manana and nidhidhyasanam and Gyana Yogi's are called akshara upasakas. Sri Krishna considers Gyana Yoga very difficult. The Upanishads compare it to walking on a razor's edge. Why is it so difficult?

It is difficult, as God cannot be objectified, and as he is inconceivable etc.

And the Lord is not available for mental conception. He is imperceptible, unconceivable; if so how can I worship or even study. Because my intellect is used to objectification and therefore an objectifying instrument will find it difficult to conceive of an unobjectifiable Brahman. And it can be ultimately received only in one form; and what is that form; that Brahman, the nirguna vastu is not objectifiable; not because it is non-existent; but because it is in the form of myself; Soham; that is called soham dhyanam; Soham is Sah Aham . That nirgunam Brahman, aham meaning, I am He; that alone got shortened and is known as hamsa mantra or hamsa gayathri.

Furthermore, Gyana Yoga also requires many qualifications, making it even more difficult.

Now the question is, if Gyana Yoga is difficult, what am I supposed to do; after all I am a seeker?

Swamiji says, here one has to be careful.

Majority of people will give answers that are non-Vedic; they will advise people to take to other paths such as Karma Yoga, Raja Yoga, Hatha Yoga etc that are not that difficult. They will say, follow a simpler Yoga. They feel Bhakti Yoga is easier, as there, all that we do, is shed tears.

Now Sampradaya, traditional teaching, does not give this answer. It says, there are no different paths to Gyana Yoga; only Gyanam will lead you there. If ignorance is the problem then knowledge is the only solution. It is like removing darkness; only light can remove darkness; other methods won't.

Shankaracharya tells very clearly in his Atma Bodha; that darkness can go only by light; ignorance can go only by knowledge. Samsara is because of ignorance, therefore moksha can be only through knowledge. And if I firmly assert that knowledge is the only means, you should not conclude I am a fanatic; because when I have to ascertain a fact; you cannot call me a fanatic. That means to not be called a fanatic, I should admit to alternative methods for removing darkness. As Dayananda Swami says; I say light alone removes darkness; if you call me a fanatic; better I will be a fanatic; rather than a lunatic. So you call me by whatever name; I have to tell ignorance goes by knowledge alone. And the vedas repeatedly ascertain this fact. And therefore to say that Gyanam is difficult and therefore I should take alternative method, is born out of confusion regarding spirituality.

And again we should remember darkness or ignorance goes only by knowledge; and knowledge comes only by enquiry or study. Any knowledge will come only by studying the relevant literature. If I want physics knowledge, I have

no other method
other than studying the physics literature; Knowledge requires
the relevant
study. Any knowledge requires consistent and systematic study.
That should be
extended to this knowledge also. Not
only you should study; I should study the appropriate
literature.

If alternative methods were
available, Sri Krishna would have used that method. Even he
says there is no
alternative method. If so, what do I do? The answer is, make
it easy. How do I
make it easy? Prepare yourself; qualify yourself through Gyana
Yogyata
Praptihi. Sri Krishna says, Gyana Yoga is very easy, if you
prepare. Swamiji
says, anything in life is easy, if you have prepared. For the
unprepared, it is
difficult, so prepare, obtain Gyanam and be free.

How to prepare? Sri Krishna
presents those steps now. He says, go to fourth, if difficult
drop to third and
if that is difficult too drop to the second and or even first
level of Bhakti
Yoga, if required.

If Nirguna Ishwara Gyana
Dhyanam is difficult come down to Saguna Ishwara Upasana,
meditating on God
with attributes; that is Lord with entire universe; as Virat
Ishwara, as
discussed in Ch. 11. Lord whose body consists of all three
Lokas; practice
Vishwa Rupa Dhyanam, even in worldly transactions. Dedicate
all your worldly

transactions to the Virat Ishwara.

So they dedicate all the actions at my feet; and where

are the feet of the Lord; Lord's feet are everywhere. So when I am doing an action, this action goes to the world and it is acted upon by the laws of the universe and all these are done by the Lord whose hands are nothing but the laws of karma. Therefore when I say, the laws of karma shape the result; for me the devotee; the laws of karma are the hands of the Lord. Every law is the hands of the lord; so Lord is shaping the result through his hands in the form of the law of karma. And, Therefore,

I dedicate to the laws of karma; to the hands of the lord; here the word Sanyasa means dedicating.

How can I offer Karma to God?

Suppose I dedicate my work on computers. How am I going to dedicate? What do you mean by dedication? Dedication is nothing but a particular attitude; and what is the attitude; until I complete my action, I have got control over the action; and once I have completed the action; the action has

become part of this universe. And universe is none other than God, because Vishva Rupa Ishvara; and this action will be reshaped in this universe by the Lord, and according to the law

of karma, an appropriate and just result is going to come; and I am mentally

prepared to accept any consequence according to the law, not fancies of the

lord; but the result is going to be perfectly according to the laws of karma.

That means I am going to get what I legitimately deserve. And it is given to me

by the lord himself; because the world is not a world for me; world is for me
Vishva rupa Ishvara. And
therefore I mentally think; my action is going to the Lord; and Lord is going
to give me the karma phalam and whatever be the consequence. I will accept
without murmuring; without grumbling; without cursing; without hesitating; I
will receive. **This inner receptivity is called dedication. This inner receptivity with regard to the consequences of any action I do. And that is called here Ishvara arpana bhavana.**

During this practice I am trying to move to the Fifth level of Bhakti Yoga. I must remember that I am committed to goal of Nirguna Ishwara Gyanam. I take to a spiritual life; but as we take on our responsibilities in world, we forget our goals. This distraction is possible. So we have to remember again and again, our goal. Thus, Ananya Yogaha means unwavering commitment.

It is like when going to Delhi we may stop at intermittent points but we don't forget our final destination is Delhi. So, they worship me through Vishwa Rupa Dhyanam.

Shloka # 6 & 7:

As for those who, having dedicated all actions to Me and accepted Me as the supreme, meditate by thinking of Me with single-minded concentration only-.

O son of Prtha, for them who have their minds absorbed in Me, I become, without delay, the Deliverer from the sea of the world which is fraught with death.

Sri Krishna says these

Vishwa Rupa Upasakas are special to me as they are dedicated to discovering Me.

So they look upon me not for their materialistic end but for reaching me; I am the means and the end; hence they are known as Jignasu Bhaktas.

I will rescue them from the ocean of Samsara that brings problems of Mrithyu as well; How long will it take?

It depends on level of student; so Sri Krishna says, before long, I will do so.

How will God rescue them?

I will make them fit for the fifth rung of the ladder including qualifications, Gurus, and if no Guru is available; I will become one myself. Forget Gyana Yoga Arjuna, commit to Vishwa Rupa Upasana.

Shloka # 8:

Fix the mind on Me alone; in Me alone rest the intellect. There is no doubt that hereafter you will dwell in Me alone.

Sri Krishna concludes the fourth rung discussion. Arjuna, forget Gyana Yoga, concentrate on Saguna Vishwa

Rupa Ishwara. **Fix your emotional mind in Me. Don't seek anything from world. Use world only for giving. Whatever your requirements take it from Me.** Vishwa Rupa Ishwara is always with me; so depend upon Him. Your intellect also must be convinced of Vishwa Rupa Ishwara; you must have answers for your intellect; here scriptural knowledge helps as in shown Ch. 7, Ch. 9, Ch 10 and Ch. 11 respectively. The teaching was: Lord is Jagat karanam while universe is Karyam, the effect. Product is not different from cause. Karyam Rupa Jagat is not separate from Karana Rupa Ishwara.

No effect can be separate from the cause. So when I am handling the ornaments, I am handling the cause, the gold alone. When I am handling the furniture, I am handling the cause the wood alone. When I am handling the pots, I am handling the cause, clay alone. When I am handling the world, I am handling the cause, Ishvara alone; Therefore akasha is Ishvara; vayu is Ishvara; agni is Ishvara; sarvam Ishvara mayam jagat. This is called conviction born out of the scriptural study. And therefore Sri Krishna says may your intellect also be convinced of what you are doing. It may take several lives. Glory of Vishwa Rupa bhakti is, I am never away from God. So you will remain in me all the time like a wave in ocean. After Vishwa Rupa Upasana practice, when there is more no doubt then go to Fifth level and be free.

Suppose Vishwa Rupa Upasana is also difficult for you? At this level, I should not have Raga and Dvesha; I should look at everyone as God. So, it may be difficult.

Sri Krishna says, then come down to level # 3.

Shloka # 9:

If, however, you are unable to establish the mind steadily on Me, then, O Dhananjaya, seek to attain Me through the Yoga of Practice.

On the other hand, if you feel you are unfit for level 4 and Vishwa Rupa Ishwara Upasana, then don't worry, come down to Eka Rupa Upasana and Ishta Devata Upasana. We have many personal forms for God; unique to Hinduism, they are all stepping-stones. Even Sri Krishna has many forms; there are even many types of relationships with God who is seen as baby, friend, father etc. You can take to anyone of them. How to develop this bhakti? Puranas develop this concept of personal God as Ishwara Leela; here even a fictitious character, upon dwelling on it, becomes a reality; this is psychological. Develop this bhakti and practice this Upasana, called here abhyasa Yoga.

Take away:

This inner receptivity is called dedication. This inner receptivity with regard to

the consequences of any action I do. And that is called here Ishvara arpana bhavana.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Mandukya Upanishad, Class 32

Continuing his teaching Swami

Paramarthananda said, having completed chapter # 2, now we will enter chapter #

3 known as Advaita Prakaranam. This chapter has 48 Karikas and is an important

chapter related to Karika's and entire Vedantic literature.

Our clarity of Advaita relies on clarity of this

chapter. If we have to understand this chapter thoroughly, we have to follow

certain conditions:

We have to review chapter 1 completely, each week. We have to review first seven mantras of Ch. # 1, as they are very important. We must do so, to better understand the meaning of each mantra. Nine Karikas are very important, especially Karikas # 10-#18 in Chapter # 1. Thus, seven mantras and nine karikas, we

must review each week to obtain most benefit from this chapter's teaching.

I am insisting on

this because chapter # 3 is built on foundation of Chapter # 1 (the seven

mantras and nine karikas). If foundation is weak, building

will not be strong.

Chapter # 3 is the building built on Chapter # 1. I will very often refer to chapter # 1. So, I will assume you are reviewing the seven mantras and nine karikas each week.

The previous chapter # 2, Vaithatya Prakaranam, is a commentary on the word Prapancha Upashamam occurring in mantra # 7. This was explained as Jagat Vaithatyam meaning it is Pada Trayam Mithyatvam.

(Note: Prapanchopasamam means world-mithyatvam. This mithyatvam was analyzed in the second chapter. Instead of using the word prapanchopasamam, Gaudapada used the word vaitathyam. Vaitathyam and mithya are synonymous. Mithya means that the waking world we experience now is only a conditional reality like the dream world. The waking world is real only in the waking state just as the dream world is real only in the dream state. Since both of them are real only in their respective states, they are not absolutely real. This conditional reality is called mithyatvam. If the waking world and the dream world are both mithya, conditionally real, what is absolutely real? It is 'I' the observing consciousness principle alone. I, the Turiya atma alone am the satyam.

I am the projector, sustainer and the experiencer of the waking world. This was established in Vaitathyaprakaranam.)

Ch 3 is also a commentary on another word in mantra # 7; Advaitam; hence chapter # 3 is called Advaita Prakaranam. Here, in this chapter # 3, Gaudapada is going to deal with Turiyam, the fourth pada.

In Chapter # 2 he dealt with the first three Padas and their unreality while here the focus is on Turiyam, the fourth Pada, and its reality.

I will now give you a general direction that Gaudapada takes in this chapter.

Referring to chapter # 1, we have mentioned that Pada 1 and Pada 2 are known as Karya padas, the effect or product, as mentioned in Karika # 11.

Pada # 3 is Karana Pada that corresponds to the cause of all effects. The fourth Pada is Turiyam or Karya Karana Vilakshanam; here Karya means effect; Karana means Cause; Vilakshana means different from.

This can also be stated as follows:

Pada # 1 and # 2: Karya
Brahma (effect, manifest)

Pada # 3: Karana Brahma
(cause, unmanifest)

Pada # 4: Karya Karana
Vilakshana (different) Brahma.

Then, the next important principles are:

Both Karya and Karana are subject to modifications. Every effect will go through modification to become karanam. Thus, both are subject to modifications, meaning they are within time.

So, the first three Padas, all exist in time.

Thus, Karya Karana Rupam is Savikaram (modification, decomposition). This explains first three Padas.

In jagrat, swapna and taijasa, all three states, there is dvaitam and division

Karanam (cause) also is Dvaitam because; cause produces effect, thus duality. Therefore, cause must contain duality in potential form. Thus, in one seed there are many potential trees; it is a hidden duality. In every parent many children are present as potential, due to the potential duality. So, Karanam (cause) is unmanifest duality. Karyam (effect) is manifest duality.

Is there duality in sleep? Even if I don't experience duality, it is present in potential form in sleep; thus when I wake up, I experience duality; so it is a hidden duality.

Hence Karya Karana Rupam is dvaita Rupam.

In Samadhi we don't give significance to Advaita anubhava; the reason is, in Samadhi, unmanifest Dvaitam is the one experienced. It is unmanifest dvaitam because when we come out of Samadhi, we say, I was in advaitam.

Four words have been introduced: Karana Pada Trayam; Karya Karana Rupam; Savikaram and Dvaitam; all are in realm of time.

Turiyam, the fourth pada is
Karya Karana Vilakshanam; it transcends cause and effect
field; so there is no
change in it. So, it is Nirvikaram.

Turiyam=Karya Karana
Vilakshanam= Nirvikara= Advaitam; Turiyam transcends time and
is the Fourth Pada.

Now Gaudapada says that first
three Padas fall within Samsara, Karya Karana
Dvaitam=Samasara.

Why do we say so? Reason is
as follows:

Duality is Samsara where even
if there is a second thing, there is fear. The second thing
can be an object of
attachment or an object of aversion. If we move with a person,
you develop Raga
or Dvesha towards him. If it is aversion it will result in
sorrow. Thus,
arrival of a mosquito gives sorrow or Dvesha.

Ragaha also gives fear due to
fear of departure. The very thought of losing Drona and
Bhishma caused great
sorrow to Arjuna. Dvaitam is cause of Savikara (modification);
and Savikara is
Samsara.

Whatever is subject to
modification is samsara, including our body. The body grows
old and we feel the
difference in our joints. All my faculties are also slowly
taken away. Thus,
Savikara is Samasara.

Karya Karana Rupam=Samsara.

As long as I look upon myself as within Karya Karana Rupa, my past karmas become cause and their effect, as such, subject to Prarabhdha. I look at myself as a victim of fate without any freedom. I feel I am a helpless victim as I am worried which Karma is going to fructify for me today. So as karyam, I am a Samsari.

If I look at myself, using free will, as cause of my future, when I look at myself as a responsible karta then I am worried about how I will discharge my duties? How will I get my daughter married? Send son to college? Etc. This causes anxiety in me. More responsible you are (cause), more stressed you are (product). Neither as a Karta or Bhokta can you be free from stress. Hence, Dvaita= Samsara; Savikara= Samsara; Karya Karana= Samsara.

So for moksha, you have to go to Turiyam alone. Advaita is never afraid. In Nirvikaram there is no fear of time. Therefore, Turiyam can't be touched by time. Thus, Karya Karana Vilakshanam= Moksha. I am not a product or cause, nor Karta nor Bhokta. So Gaudapada wants to reveal Turiyam that alone can give moksha, in chapter # 3.

Karika # 1:

**upāsanāśrito
dharmo jāte brahmaṇi vartate |**

prāgutpatterajaṃ sarvaṃ tenāsau kṛpaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ || 1

1. The Jīva betaking itself to devotion (upāsanā) thinks itself to be related to the Brahman that is supposed to have manifested Himself

He is said to be of narrow intellect because he thinks that before creation all was of the nature of the unborn (Reality).

In first two karikas of this chapter, Gaudapada introduces the subject: that dvaitam is samsara; Savikara equals Samsara; and that Pada Trayam equals Samsara.

Any type of duality is samsara, secular or religious. Even a great upasaka, considered a great devotee of Lord, even he is within realm of duality. It is a religious duality based upon scriptures. Even here duality is dvaitam, Savikaram etc and hence under samsara. **This is a disturbing part of Chapter # 3. Advanced Advaita scriptural texts criticize Karma and Upasana as Dvaitam.**

(Note: There are two types of dvaitam. One is called secular dvaitam and the other is sacred dvaitam. Secular dvaitam consists of I, (the jivatma) and the observed world (the anatma). This jivatma-anatma dvaitam is secular dvaitam because everyone knows this as 'I am here and the world is there'. In addition to the secular dvaitam, shastra also introduces another type of dvaitam in the context of karma-yoga and upasana-yoga. Veda-purva section consists of karma-section that deals with karma-yoga and upasana-section that deals with upasana-yoga, which also involves duality. In the karma-section, I, the jivatma, am the worshipper of the Lord and the paramatma is Ishvara; introduced as Someone, to be

worshipped. This is worshipper-worshipped dvaitam, is sacred dvaitam. In the upasana-section, even when we drop the rituals and take up meditation, there also we have dvaitam: I am the meditator and Ishvara is the meditated called meditator-meditated dvaitam. Gaudapada says that even though the sacred dvaitam is considered very sacred and auspicious, that sacred dvaitam also will be a cause of samsara only. Any dvaitam is cause of samsara, secular or sacred. Therefore, everyone will have to transcend the secular and the sacred dvaitam and come to advaitam.)

So every upasaka is a religious samsari. This creates confusion in our minds. Hence beginners should not come to Mandukya Upanishad where it implies that conducting Pujas etc don't matter.

We say, Upasana Dvaitam kept, as an end by itself, is samsara. But we are willing to allow Upasana when it is a means to move from Dvaitam to Advaitam. The problem is that in the name of sacredness many people remain in Dvaitam.

By the way, these are secret verses are not to be publicized.

(Further Notes: The Upanishad points out that atma is advaitam and that everyone should compulsorily know the advaita atma. Why does the Upanishad say this? Gaudapada answers that dvaitam is the cause of several problems called samsara and so advaita-Gyanam is the only solution for this samsara. All the Upanishads have repeatedly said the same thing. Kathopanishad says: whoever is in dvaitam will go from mortality to

mortality. In Taittiriya Upanishad, it is said: even if the slightest duality is perceived, you will feel insecurity (limitation, helplessness, fear, anger and depression). In Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, it is said: dvaitam is the cause of insecurity, fear, etc. This is everyone's problem and for that problem advaita gyanam is the only remedy. The problem is not the absence of advaitam but it is the absence of advaita gyanam. When it is said that dvaitam is the problem, we should carefully note the following: Experience of duality is not a problem. In fact, it is enjoyment. Variety is enjoyment. Dvaita transaction is also not a problem. Dvaita experience and transaction are not problems. Then what is problem? **Taking dvaitam as satyam alone is the problem because dvaitam is not satyam but it is only mithya.** When mithya dvaitam is mistaken as satyam, one expects stability that leads to emotional leaning or dependence on the mithya dvaitam. Being nama-rupa, mithya dvaitam is not stable, and it is always changing. Relying on unstable things for stability creates a lot of problems. Relying on the unreliable things is the definition of samsara. The reliance happens because of mistaking mithya to be satyam. Therefore, we should stop emotionally relying upon mithya dvaitam and start relying on satya advaitam. That satya advaitam is Turiya atma. This advaita-gyanam is important for everyone.)

The

word Dharma in karika means the Jiva who is committed to Upasana or Saguna Ishwara

Dhyanam. He looks at deity as an object of superior attribute while looking at

himself as an ordinary Papi; this is the upasya upasaka dvaitam.

In

the karika, the word Jate means with dvaitam comes Karya Karanam as well. He is

in Virat, Vishwa, Taijasa, and Hiranyagarbha etc.

The word Utpate means before

origination of world; or before Srishti, sthiti and laya, everything was in Ajam

Karanam; meaning Brahma Rupam. His mind is in Karya Karana Brahma. I exist is

Karya Karana Brahma; this is thinking of Upasaka.

As long as he is in dvaitam,

he is within time or savikaram. He thinks, now he is away from God and that in

moksha he will join God. This concept is wrong.

His concept of Moksha is

going and coming. He has not understood moksha. Merger into God, a time bound

event, is not Moksha. Real moksha is that: I am Turiyam, ever free, and not an

event in future. But Upasaka does not understand this.

Gaudapada pities the Upasaka

as an unfortunate person; although whole world had placed him on a pedestal;

from a Turiya Drishti; he is just a samsari.

So Gaudapada is going to ask

us if we are ready for a journey beyond Karma and Upasana to a

place where
there is no Jiva Ishwara Bheda.

Take Away:

Taking
dvaitam as satyam alone is the problem because dvaitam is not
satyam but it is
only mithya. When mithya dvaitam is mistaken as satyam, one
expects stability
that leads to emotional leaning or dependence on the mithya
dvaitam.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy

Baghawad Geeta, Class 156: Chapter 12, Verses 2 – 4

Shloka # 2:

**The Blessed Lord said Those who meditate on Me
by fixing their minds on Me with steadfast devotion (and)
being endowed with
supreme faith-they are considered to be the most perfect yogis
according to Me.**

Continuing his teachings
Swamiji said, the chapter # 12 begins with a question from
Arjuna. He asks, if
Saguna Dhyanam is superior or Nirguna Dhyanam? Saguna Ishwara
Dhyanam means meditating
on God with attributes while Nirguna Ishwara dhyanam means

meditation on the attribute-less Ishwara. The question also implies which type of devotee is greater.

Sri Krishna answered; the question itself is wrong. question of superior or inferior is not valid as that involves comparison. Between Saguna Dhyanam and Nirguna Dhyanam there is no choice. Everyone has to go through both stages. Both Sadhanas bestow different benefits.

Once both are compulsory, how to practice them?

They can't be simultaneously practiced. They have to be practiced in a graded manner meaning one after the other. Saguna Dhyanam prepares one for nirguna Dhyanam. It purifies the mind. So, Arjuna, don't ask what is better. Sri Krishna says, Saguna Bhakta is superior to nirguna bhakta; however, Nirguna bahkta reaches Me. Saguna Ishwara and Vishwa Rupa Ishwara are two forms of Saguna Ishwara. Fixing their minds upon me, they practice with full commitment and without fail. They are endowed with intense faith in Me. **God does not present material growth; he gives purity of mind, a non-tangible result. So we have to have intense faith, as no tangible results are forthcoming.**

Those who practice Saguna

Dhyanam are indeed superior.

Shloka # 3:

Those, however, who meditate in every way on the Immutable, the Indefinable, the Unmanifest, which is all pervading, incomprehensible, change-less, immovable and constant.

Some other people follow nirguna Brahma Dhyanam as a part of Gyana Yoga. It is highest stage of Bhakti yoga.

Therefore in these three verses, Krishna is introducing Gyana yoga sadhana, which is the practice of Nirguna Ishvara dhyanam. Meditating on my highest nature. A description of Nirguna Ishwara includes:

1. Akshara: Nirguna Brahaman.

2. Avyaktam; Ishwara in highest nature is not perceptible to **sense organs of Shabda, Sparsha, Rupa, Rasa and Gandha. Nature consist of these five sense attributes hence it is called Pra-Pancha.** Once five sense organs are closed, our world disappears. So, here, original Sri Krishna can't be touched, smelt etc. There are many things that can't be perceptible but can be ideas that can be conceived as a concept. There are many things, which cannot be perceived by the sense organs but they can be conceived by the mind; there are so many emotions; love; anger; happiness; etc. they are not perceptible; many mathematical scientific concepts and laws; you do not see; but they are ideas; Ideas cannot be perceived by the sense organs; but they can be conceived by the mind; that is why they are called

concepts; so, can you say Nirguna Krishna can be conceived by the mind?

3. **Achintyam:** I can't be conceived in mind. I am unobjectifiable, inconceivable. If God can't be conceived, how can one talk of God? When we see an object, we give it a name as it can be perceived or conceived. But God can't be perceived or conceived.

4. **Aprameyam:** Lord can't be described, indescribable or un-objectifiable. The various pramanama's can't prove it. Hence called Aprameyam.

5. **Sarvatragam:** Sri Krishna adds he exists everywhere. He says he is Achalam, he can't move. Saguna Krishna moves but Nirguna Krishna can't move, as he is formless and all pervading. To have form, it needs a boundary. If God has no form, there is no boundary; so, God is like space, all pervading, space also does not move, neither does God. Saguna God is subject to arrival and departure; Nirguna God is not.

5. **Kutastham:** He is free from all modifications. We have seen six modifications on the part of the physical body; do you remember; asthi, potentially existent; jayate, born; vardhate, grows; viparinamate, metamorphoses; kshiyate, declines; vinashyati, dies. These are the six-fold modifications caused by the time principal; so anything that exists within time; anything that is influenced by time will grow with all the six-fold modifications. The Nirguna Sri Krishna is free from all modifications.

6. **Kutaha:** means anvil of a blacksmith. The metal undergoes change but the anvil does not change at all. So, a changeless

substratum is required for all changes to happen. It is a witness to all changes, while witness itself cannot change. Suppose I say that the morning class students are different from evening class; and evening class are different from morning class; you know that the students change; but the teacher is avasthatraya sakshi; If morning class teacher is different; and evening class teacher is different; I will never be able to say that the morning class students are different; evening class students are different. And therefore the knower of changes should not be subject to change. And therefore the witness consciousness principle is compared to kutah; an anvil; upon which the body-metal and the mind-metal is hammered by the various experiences of life; every letter you received; every phone call you get; they are all hammering on your head; When all these hammerings takes place, your body changes; your mind changes; but there is the changeless one. And therefore Nirguna Sri Krishna is called the changeless substratum, which remains like an anvil; that which remains changeless like an anvil. Thus, the witness consciousness principle is compared to an anvil.

7. **Dhruvam**: He is eternal. He is beyond space and time. This is the God that is meditated upon in Gyana Yoga. How can we meditate on a featureless Brahman? Sri Krishna says one has to prepare for this.

Shloka # 4: By fully controlling all the organs and always being even-minded, they, engaged in the welfare of all beings, attain Me alone.

Preparatory qualifications for Nirguna Ishwara Dhyanam are:

Four fold qualification of Sadhana chatushtaya sampathihi; I will just enumerate them for my satisfaction: discrimination, dispassion; discipline and desire; the 4 D's.

The four qualifications are presented here:

One has to master extrovert senses organs.

Why master them? Sri

Krishna says Nirguna Ishwara is one who is not experienced as an object, yet such a God exists.

And

why should we master the extrovert sense organs. What is the reason; I will give

you a clue here. Previously Krishna has described His higher nature; Nirguna Ishwara as unobjectifiable

one, Unobjectifiable means not experiencable as an object. And if Nirguna Ishwara is not

objectifiable and still such an Ishwara exists, that Lord can exist only

in one way. There is only one thing in the creation; which is unobjectifiable; There is only one such thing that exists.

Thus, the eye can't see itself. This subject eye can't be seen. Similarly, the

higher Sri Krishna is nothing else but the Observing Consciousness principle.

Nirguna Ishwara meditation is meditating on myself, not my body; this is Atma

Dhyanam or meditating on the meditator.

Since I don't objectify; my

sense organs don't have anything to dwell on. So **Indriya-nigraha** is a qualification.

Equanimity

under all circumstances, a poised mind; without ego and Dvesha; committed to

the wellbeing of all beings; not a narrow mind, but an

expanded mind. I should
feel pain of other people, an empathetic mind.

How can I do so? **Daily chant one prayer; it will give you
punyam; distribute this punyam to all the living beings. This
prayer will make
mind sensitive.**

Those who have these
qualifications, they will attain Me.

Shloka # 5:

**For them who have their minds attached to the
Unmanifested the struggle is greater; for, the Goal which is
the Unmanifest is
attained with difficulty by the embodied ones.**

Here Sri Krishna openly
admits Nirguna Dhyanam is extremely difficult. The path of
Gyana yoga consisting
of Sravanam, mananam, and nidhidhyasanam is a difficult one.

There are big obstacles to
be faced by people committed to Nirguna Ishwara Dhyanam. It is
like walking on
a razor's edge. The destination of a formless one is indeed
difficult to reach
for ordinary people.

The biggest and commonest obstacle to Vedanta is strong
attachment to one own physical body, which makes the mind
grossest mind; because we are identified with our grossest
personality; To remember yesterday's class; grossest is
annamaya kosa abhimana; he does not have even time to think of
improving the mind, because where is the time of think of
improving the mind, when I am all the time busy improving the
body; And therefore I am obsessed with the body; I am obsessed
with the protection of the body; therefore I am obsessed with

the procurement for food, clothing and shelter and I am obsessed with the procurement of these three after retirement; that also has been seen; there will be no income; and the inflation; diseases comes; who will pay for the medical bill; are the children reliable; seeing them; it is not; they may be reliable; but what type of daughter in law will come I do not know; Therefore all the time worried about my physical security; and such a mind cannot think of anything beyond the physical body; and once I am attached to the physical body; through the physical body, I will be attached to the people around; directly proportional to the physical attachment is: attachment to various relations because every relation is through the body. And therefore I have a very strong individuality; limiting me; localizing me; and therefore such a person cannot imagine the unlocalised formless; it cannot transform itself; transform is transcending the form, is transformation; And therefore Krishna says: stronger the bodily attachment; more difficult is Gyana yoga; the details in the next class.

Take away:

God does not present material growth; he gives purity of mind, a non-tangible result. So we have to have intense faith, as no tangible results are forthcoming.

Nature consisting of the five sense attributes of Shabda, Sparsha, Rupa, Rasa and Gandha is called Pra-Pancha.

Sadhana chatushtaya sampathihi are:

discrimination,
dispassion; discipline and desire; the 4 D's.

For an Empathic mind: Daily chant one prayer; it will give you punya; distribute this punya to all the living beings. This prayer will make mind sensitive.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Mandukya Upanishad, Class 31

Continuing his teaching

Swamiji said, today I will give you a summary of the Chapter # 2 that is also

known as Vaithatya Prakaranam. Mandukya Karika is an analysis of the Mandukya Upanishad.

In this Karika Gaudapada is expounding from the Upanishad, not his own opinion,

rather, whatever is implicit in the Upanishad is made explicit using a method

of extraction known as Shruthyartapatti pramanam, an indirect manner of gaining knowledge from Shruti.

In entire Mandukya Upanishad

the most important mantra is # 7 dealing with Turiyam. This topic is expanded

upon in this chapter. Turiya mantra has two words that are very important:

Prapanchoupashamam and Advaitam. Prapanchoupashamam is expanded upon in Chapter

2 and Advaitam is expanded upon in Chapter # 3.

The word 'prapanchopasamam' means the prapancha mithyatvam. Prapancha refers to the waking world, the universe. Upasama literally means absent. 'prapanchopasama' means that even though we experience the world, factually it is not there. It is experientially available, factually non-existent. It is otherwise called mithyatvam, or vaitathyam. Prapanchopasamam, prapancha mithyatvam and prapancha vaitathyam all mean that the world is mithya.

Prapanchoupasamam also means, free from the world. What is free from the world mean? It means Turiyam is free from the world or it is world-less. This word negates world. What is its significance? Upanishad can't negate experience of the world; we can't negate it as well, as we experience it daily. Experiential experience of the world cant be negated but when the Upanishad says it does not exist, it means, world is only experiential but factually non-existent or world is seemingly existent or apparently existent.

Prapanchoupashamam deals with unreality of world. Idea of unreality can be conveyed in Sanskrit by words such as Satyam, Mithya and Vitathvam. They all convey unreality of world. Since chapter # 2 analyzes unreality of world implicit in Upanishad, it is called Vaithatya Prakaranam; it means Jagat Vaithatya Prakaranam.

Jagat is universe or cosmos,
but in Mandukya Upanishad, it means the three Padas; that is,
Waker & gross
universe; Dreamer and subtle universe; and Sleeper and Causal
universe. These
three pairs, together, are called Pada Trayam. So, Chapter # 2
can also be
called Pada Traya Vaithatya Prakaranam.

Having seen significance of title
we will now come to the chapter # 2 itself. It has 38 karikas
and they can be
classified in five headers. They are:

1. Karika's # 1-# 3:

Swapna Prapancha Vaithatyam,
meaning unreality of dream world.

- Karika # 4- # 18:
Jagrat Prapancha Vaithatyam; meaning unreality of
waker's universe.
- Karika # 19-29:
Misconceptions regarding the reality or Kalpana
Prakaraha; varieties of
confusion.
- Karika # 30- #
34: Summary or conclusion of main discussion of pada
traya mithyatvam also
called Upasamhara.
- Karikas #35- #
38:

Describe the sadhanas and their results or
their Phalam. We can also call it spiritual disciplines and
their results.

We will see each one the five
headers now.

1. **Swapna Prapancha Vaithatyam:** Here Gaudapada wants to establish unreality of dream world. Dream example is very useful. Unreal dream world appears as real, in sleep. If I am convinced about it, I can extend it, to waker's world as well.

Therefore, dream example is very important. Gaudapada gives three proofs of unreality of dream world. Most people probably see dream world as unreal anyway. So the three proofs are:

1. Shruti; 2. Yukti and 3. Anubhava.

1. Shruti Pramanam:

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says dream world is unreal; dream is only our mental projection where non-tangible thoughts seem tangible ones.

- Yukti Pramanam:

The logic is that dream objects can't really exist, as they don't have the required space to exist or the required time to exist. Required space is not there as everything is within our head; thus our head can't accommodate say an elephant. Similarly the required time, to beget children and grandchildren is not available in a dream. Hence they are considered projections of mind.

- Anubhava

Pramanam: On waking up we find all our dream experience disappears into thin air. Sleeping in New York, I am seeing Coovam, but it disappears upon waking.

Thus, we have three pramanams

of dream.

▪ **Jagrat Prapancha Vaithatyam:** Karikas # 4- # 18:

From the 4th verse up to the 18th verse, the second and the most important topic is covered, which is that the waking world is also mithya exactly like the dream world. Just as the dream world appears as satyam in dream, the waking world appears as satyam in the waking state. Even though the waking world appears as satyam in the waking state, still it is mithya only.

Gaudapada

in the very powerful verse 6 says that the dream world is mithya because it is subject to arrival and departure. The waking world is available in the waking state but the entire waking world disappears when you switch over from waking to dream or deep sleep. The moment you change the state, the entire waking world disappears and the dream world appears, and in dream it does not appear as dream, but like the waking world only. The waking world comes in the waking state, it goes in the dream state, the dream world comes in the dream state and it goes in the waking state. Each one appears in its own respective state and disappears in the other state. So both the worlds must have equal status. Therefore, since the dream world is known to be mithya, then the waking world also must be given the same mithya status. Thus Gaudapada says that the waking world is mithya because it is subject to arrival and departure

just like the
dream world is.

Gaudapada says Waker's
universe is unreal; He gives two reasons for this: 1. Implied
reason; and 2.
Direct reason.

Implied reason:

Whatever
is objectified is Mithya. Whatever is seen; is mithya. Any
object can reveal
its existence depending on an observer. Without observer, no
object can reveal
its existence. Since object depends on Subject it has a
dependent existence;
hence object is mithya. Thus, Jagrat Prapancha is an object of
experience hence
it is mithya. Say, in another higher state of experience, one
experiences a
mystical world, even that is mithya as even that mystical
world depends on an
extraordinary observer. So, any Drishyam is Mithya.

Direct Reason:

Whatever is impermanent is
mithya. Anything impermanent enjoys only temporary existence.
Temporary
existence means borrowed existence; or it means dependent
existence; however, anything
with independent existence will exist forever. Jagrat
Prapancha is subject to
arrival and departure just like the dream world is, hence it
is impermanent.

Therefore Gaudapada concludes
Drishyatvam and Anithyatvam are the cause Mithyatvam.

Thereafter,
several objections are raised and all these objections are
with an intention to
show that dream is mithya and waking is satyam. To prove this,
various
definitions of reality are presented. Gaudapada
refutes these definitions of reality. They
give four reasons:

1. Utility: Waker's
universe has utility only in waking state but not in dream. If
utility is
criterion then dream world will become real. Gaudapada refutes
this by pointing
out that each world is useful in the respective state and each
one is useless
in the other state. Dream water is useful in dream but not in
waking.
Similarly, waker's water is useful in the waking state but not
useful in the
dream. So if utility is the criterion, both should be accepted
as the same and
it cannot be said that one is satyam and the other is mithya.

2. Clarity: Whatever is a clear
experience is real. Thus, dream is very vague and so unreal.
Gaudapada's answer is
that the dream world is unreal only from the standpoint of the
waking state but
when you are in dream, every event is very clear just as
everything in the
waking world is clear in the waking state. Clarity cannot be
used to
differentiate between dream and the waking world.

3. Externality: Whatever is
externally available is real. The waking world is outside and
the dream world is inside.

What is outside is real and what is inside is unreal, mithya. Gaudapada refutes this by saying that the dream world is said to be internal and unreal only when you are in the waking state, but in dream, the dream world is experienced as external. Internality and externality logic will thus not work to show that the dream world is mithya and the waking world is real.

4.
Objectivity:

Objectivity is a criterion for reality. Whatever is commonly available to all is real. Thus, this mike is available to all, but dream is not available to all. Gaudapada however disagrees; he says even dream world is available to them, if you are in a dream. Dream train is available to many people in dream.

So, none of the above criteria are correct.

If dream and Waker's world's are unreal then what is reality? Unreal requires support. **Reality is that which exists but which is never observed.** What is that thing? It is the observer or Consciousness alone that is reality. **Everything else that is observed is unreal.** Thus world is observed, hence unreal; body is observed, hence unreal; mind is observed, hence unreal. The awareness of world, body and mind; that awareness principle, is Turiyam or Satyam. Thus, all three states are located and supported in Turiyam.

Now Gaudapada says, **everything unreal is born out of ignorance of reality. Therefore Turiya Agyanam is cause of Jagrat Prapancha and Swapna**

Prapancha. Citing example of snake and rope, rope ignorance is cause of snake appearance.

When rope is mistaken for snake, it becomes a serious problem. The waking world will create serious

problems

when it is mistaken as satyam. Mithya mistaken as satyam will create problems

because mithya is unstable. Satyam alone is stable. When we take the mithya

world as satyam, we will seek support and security from the unstable mithya

objects, name, fame, power, position, and even relationships. Mithya never

remains the same. Because of the ignorance of "I am satyam and jagat is mithya",

we are facing problems. 'I am satyam, the world is mithya ' is not an academic

knowledge but it makes a big change in our life itself, the way we look at us,

the way we look at the world. There is a huge perspective change, which is the

cause of moksha itself.

Similarly Turiya Agyanam is

cause of Pada Trayam. So the teaching is: Turiyam Satyam, Pada Trayam Mithya.

- **Misconceptions regarding the reality:** Because of ignorance of Turiyam, many misconceptions are born. In each misconception one object or another is considered Satyam. " I

“ am the truth, is missed out and an object is taken as reality. Some say energy is truth; scientists feel truth is somewhere outside and are still struggling to find it. The irony is that the Searcher of reality is the Reality; Seeker is the sought. The more you struggle, the more you miss.

Even

great philosophers have misconceptions. Gaudapada gives such philosophers hope; he says, behind every misconception, unreality, there is Truth. Ultimately the misconception will save them, he says. Vedas allow for misconceptions. God, the ultimate reality, is initially presented as an object. An object is not the real god but still Vedas allow it in beginning stages; like Vishnu, Shiva etc. We look at God as an object not realizing such a god can't be true.

Gaudapada

says even that object god worship will make you fit for Vedanta. Then you will question and realize god is not an object. Guru will then guide you to see that you are yourself god; Tat Tvam Asi. That is why we allow all religions to worship god in one form or another. But ultimately God is Turiyam. With this misconception is concluded.

▪ **Upasamhara:**

Karika # 30- 34:

I the observer am Satyam.

Whatever I experience is mithya. Advantage of this knowledge is that: Mithya

can't affect Satyam. Observed universe can't touch Me; I am free from all problems created by universe. Here, I, as Turiyam alone, have the right to say world is unreal. I am ever free from Samsara.

Gaudapada says even different words used for Turiyam are unreal. The word Turiyam is relative to each of the three padas. Just as father of dream child is unreal or his fatherhood is unreal. So also the word Advaitam is unreal as is the word consciousness, which is also unreal with respect to inertness. **So no word can be used.**

Gaudapada says when we say world is mithya, it can be stated in two different forms:

1. An unreal world exists;
and
- 2) A real world does not exist.

Which of the two is correct? Saying to some one, you are seemingly intelligent can mean he is not intelligent. When we say world exist, it means unreal world does not exist. Unreal is from standpoint of Turiyam.

▪ **Sadhanas and their result: Karikas # 35-38:**

Five sadhanas were given:

1. Sadhana
chatushtaya sampathihi. This is stated as freedom from

attachment, fear and
anger.

2. Vedanta Sravanam:

Systematic study of Vedanta.

3. Mananam: Here

Munihi means one who performs mananam.

4. Nidhidhyasanam:

Dwelling on the teaching.

5. Sanyasa ashrama:

This is only an optional sadhana. One can practice
internal sanyasam as well.

Karika # 38:

The Phalam: He will be ever
established in the knowledge that I am ever-free Turiyam even
during worldly
transactions.

With this the chapter
concluded.

Take Away: Rope

ignorance is cause of snake appearance. Everything unreal is
born out of
ignorance of reality. Thus, Turiya Agyanam is cause of Jagrat
Prapancha and
Swapna Prapancha.

Reality is that which exists
but which is never observed. Everything else that is observed
is unreal.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy

Baghawad Geeta, Class 155: Chapter 12, Verses 1 & 2

Swamiji introduced the chapter today. It is a small chapter consisting of 20 shlokas but a very significant chapter giving a comprehensive picture of the entire Vedic teaching or the Veda Sara.

In this chapter the first part, Shlokas # 1-12, deal with Bhakti Yoga as a means of attaining moksha. By way of discussing this topic, it removes many misconceptions about Bhakti Yoga. Shlokas # 13-20 discusses Bhakti Yoga Phalam.

These are the two topics discussed in this chapter. I will now give you a bird's eye view of Bhakti Yoga. Bhakti Yoga is not a particular sadhana but it is an entire range of sadhanas that culminate in moksha. Three sadhanas are discussed in Vedas. Gita, being the essence of Vedas, gives them as: 1) Karma yoga, 2) Upasana Yoga and, 3) Gyana Yoga. In Vedas, the word bhakti is almost never used. These three sadhanas together form Bhakti yoga. Why is it so? Sri Krishna feels, all three sadhanas should be practiced, with Ishwara Bhakti. Without an atmosphere of Ishwara Bhakti, they are not Yoga.

Thus:

Bhakti Yoga level 1: Karma
Yoga

Bhakti Yoga level 2:
Upasana Yoga

Bhakti Yoga level 3: Gyana
Yoga

For the sake of all
seekers, Sri Krishna further subdivides the three levels of
sadhanas into five
to make it a little simpler.

Thus:

Karma Yoga: First level

Second level

Upasana Yoga: First level

Second

level

Gyana Yoga: Not divided.

What is difference between
Karma yoga level 1 and level 2? In level -1, Sri Krishna wants
to accommodate all
materialistic people who are not interested in moksha or in
serving other
people. He says, let materialistic people pursue their worldly
desires; as
suppression of desires is dangerous, as mind then fantasizes
on them and could
lead one astray. Even if you are not interested in god, but
only in money and

entertainment, continue. You can still be a Karma Yogi so long as you follow two conditions:

1. Fulfill your selfish desires legitimately.
2. When you pursue worldly pleasures and get results, before enjoying them, look upon them as gift of God or Ishwara Prasada.

Be it a car, dress, house or even food, take it first as a prasada and then enjoy it. Thus, look at house as a temple of god and that you are living in a temple of God.

Look upon even your children, not as your children, but as a gift from the Lord; thus this level of karma yoga can be defined as prasada buddhya, sakama karma anushtanam.

If I continue to perform this sadhana, then gradually, mind becomes purer and purer. And as the mind becomes purer and purer, I begin to question: Can I spend my entire life for my own personal benefit? Should't I contribute something to the world? So this kind of questions gradually comes, which is an indication of purity; desire for para upakara; in sakama karma, I have a desire only for taking; in nishkama karma, I develop a desire for giving also. Life is not mere taking; life is giving also; previously I measure my success in terms of how much I have taken. Now my mind changes; I ask the question how much I have given; success is not proportional to taking;

Success is directly
proportional to giving.

This is the difference
between materialistic and spiritual approach.

Second level of Karma Yoga:

Sakama karma becomes level one; now, selfishness becomes less; awareness of paroupakara karmani rises. Nishkama karma and Pancha Maha Yagna karmani find more time. I do fulfill selfish desires but I also contribute to others. Giving, need not be money alone, but it can also be time and consoling words, all performed without arrogance, but done with Ishwara Arapana Bhavana. My narrowness of mind comes down. These are two levels of karma yoga.

Sakama karma gives purity.

Nishkama karma gives purity
at a faster level.

Once one has gone through two levels of Karma Yoga next comes Upasana Yoga. It is meditation on Ishwara or Saguna Ishwara Dhyanam.

Karma yoga is a must for purity of mind but it has some disadvantages. A karma yogi involved in sakama karma or nishkama karma is a busy person. In both levels of karma, the person is extrovert in nature, or with Bahir Mukhatvam. This extroverted-ness is an obstruction to Gyana Yoga. Gyana Yoga involves enquiry into your own self or Pancha Kosha Viveka; it

requires an
introverted mind.

Extrovert will miss self-knowledge.

In Upasana, I turn inwards, and invoke God in my heart. I train to look at my inner nature, a very important training. Sri Krishna divides this meditation into two groups.

1. Eka Ishwara Rupa
Dhyanam
2. Aneka Rupa
Ishwara Dhyanam.

Eka Rupa Ishwara Dhyanam:

Ishta Devata Dhyanam is known as Abhyasa Yoga. Once one has practiced this for some time, Sri Krishna suggests, going onto Aneka Rupa Ishwara. Look at God as not located in one place, but expand mind to Vishwa Rupa Ishwara. First sadhana focuses one's mind, while second one expands the mind. Both are Saguna Ishwara Upasanas. These are two levels of Upasanas.

Now person has Gyana

Yogyata. Now he is entering Gyana Nirguna Ishwara Brahman. In Chapter 7 it is called Para Prakriti and it includes Vedanta Sravanam, Mananam and Nidhidhyasanam. It is the systematic study of Nirguna Ishwara so that we come to know Aham Brahma Asmi. Here, Ishwara and Jiva difference disappears.

Having gained this

knowledge I go to mananam to remove doubts or obstacles.

Finally, Nidhidhyasanam is that which removes psychological traumas in life. These traumas don't allow us to enjoy the divine knowledge.

So, the three put together is Gyana Yoga. In Nirguna Ishwara, there is neither male nor female. This Gyana Yoga is the final Sadhana.

All five Sadhanas put together is Bhakti Yoga. Gyana Yoga is a part of Bhakti Yoga.

Everyone has to go through all five sadhanas. No one is born with desire to know God. That is why Vedas have many Sakama karmas such as Putra kameshti Yaga. Aham Brahma Asmi is ultimate goal.

Shlokas 1- 12: Start with sakama karma and go through all the stages, and gain the knowledge, aham brahma asmi; which is the culmination of bhakthi

yoga. This is the topic of the first twelve verses;

Shokas 13-20: Sri Krishna talks about the nature of a person; the character of a person who had gone through all these five stages; successfully, or a Para Bhakta, or an Advaita Gyani is described. This Para bhakta is my dearest devotee, says Sri Krishna. He is nirguna Bhakta; he has become one with me and I have become one with him. With this background we enter the chapter.

Shloka # 1:

Arjuna said Those devotees who, being thus ever dedicated, meditate on You, and those again (who meditate) on the Immutable, the Unmanifested-of them, who are the best experiencers of yoga [(Here) yoga means samadhi, spiritual absorption.] ?

Chapter begins with question of Arjuna, an Anuprashnam; a question based on previous teaching. He asks, Is Saguna Bhakta superior or is Nirguna Bhakta superior?

First line of shloka: Some saguna bhaktas meditate on sgauna Ishwara with constant commitment. What type of Saguna Ishwara is meditated upon? The Saguna Ishwara as Aneka Rupa Ishwara or Vishwa Rupa Ishwara is meditated upon.

Second line: There are some other people who meditate on Akshara Ishwara or Param Brahman, the one free of all attributes or Nirguna Brahman. He is attribute-less, not perceptible to sense organs, can't hear, smell or touch; he is not objectifiable by our sense organs. On this Nirguna Brahman, some meditate upon. How can they meditate without an un-objectifiable Brahman? They do so by seeing the subject, I, as Brahman or through Atma Dhyanam.

Among them, the two groups, who is superior? Indirectly, Arjuna's question is, is Saguna Ishwara superior or Nirguna Ishwara superior?

Shloka # 2:

The Blessed Lord said Those who meditate on Me by fixing their minds on Me with steadfast devotion (and) being endowed with supreme faith-they are considered to be the most perfect yogis according to Me.

Sri Krishna answered

Arjuna's question. Saguna Ishwara has objectified beauty. Many philosophers say

Nirguna Ishwara does not exist. Others say it is not worth knowing. Real answer

is that the question itself is wrong. For a wrong question there is no right

answer. It is like asking, how many centimeters is the weight of this clip? It

can't be answered, as it is not a logical question. So, when we compare two

things, comparison comes only when we have to choose between the two. Thus,

choice can only be between two similar things. Suppose one wants to drink

something; he has a choice of tea, coffee or coke; here he has a choice. Choice

can be in the type of container to drink from as well, such as cup, tumbler

etc. But if you ask, do you want a tumbler or a drink; there is no choice

there. Comparison is only among similar things.

Dvaitam or Saguna bhakti is

a means, a stepping-stone, to reach nirguna bhakti, the goal. There is no choice,

as nirguna bhakta has to go through Saguna Bhakti. Without Saguna Bhakti one

can't get nirguna bhakti. This is the culmination of the Sadhana. But Sri Krishna

does not want to insult Arjuna by telling him his question is not meaningful.

So Sri Krishna says, Saguna Bhaktas are superior, while nirguna bhakta attains

Me. So everyone has to take Saguna Bhakti and then move to Nirguna bhakti.

Take away:

Bhakti Yoga is not a particular sadhana but it is an entire range of sadhanas that culminate in moksha.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy