

Bagawat Geeta, Class 42

Greetings All,

Shloka # 15:

ॐ तत् सच्चिदानन्दं ब्रह्म ॥ ३.१५ ॥

ॐ तत् सच्चिदानन्दं ब्रह्म ॥ ३.१५ ॥

Know that this work is born of the Vedas, and that the Vedas are born of the imperishable Reality. Therefore, the all-pervading Veda is eternally rooted in sacrificial work.

Continuing his teaching of the Gita and refreshing our memory of the last class, Swami Paramarthananda said, Sri Krishna was talking about the importance of Karma Yoga. He was looking at it from different angles such as Agya, Yagya, Chittashudhi, and now Dharma. Dharma is a way of life that maintains harmony of creation. Sri Krishna says everything in the universe is a cyclical process. Giving follows receiving. If I only receive, the cycle is not complete and this results in a violation of the harmony. This violation is not good for society, our body, our psychology and our financials as well. If I take food only in and if I do not expend energy, again I am violating the harmony. Imagine a person who only eats. There will be stagnation through fat accumulation, increased cholesterol etc. The doctor will prescribe walking or jogging so that he expends energy and thus maintains harmony. This example can be expanded at all levels. The same can be said of knowledge. I should share the knowledge I receive. If you learn an art and do not share it with others they say you will become a Brahma Rakshasa. Whatever I take, I should give back.

It is the same at emotional level. Give love if you receive it. This is the cyclical process. If there is a stagnant pool and a river close by as well, most will choose the river. I should share money, energy, love etc. Each one of us must share. This will maintain harmony. We need to give, to

maintain harmony. Giving is not natural. Grabbing is natural. Whatever is free, we take. Shastra's need not teach us how to take; they need to teach us to give.

Among hundreds of people, you can find one courageous person. Among thousands of people you can find one true scholar; among lakhs of people, you may find one good communicator. But, how about a true giver? In the entire creation, to find a true giver is difficult. They are rare. So, Karma Yogi's are rare. So, Karma Yoga is all about giving. If I train myself to give, only then can I give up Ahamkara. I must give up Mamakara to become a Karma Yogi and give up Ahamkara to become a Gyana Yogi. God gave out Vedas. So, Vedas, given to us by God, taught us this life of sharing.

Shloka # 15 says Vedic teaching is all pervading. Especially wherever Yagya is going on or Danam is going on the Vedic teaching predominates.

Shloka # 16:

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He who fails to conform to the cycle of functions thus established is, Arjuna! a sinner; he revels in the sphere of sense-life; he lives in vain.

Sri Krishna pointed out that while Karma yoga is giving oriented, Karma itself is taking oriented. The more a Karma Yogi gives, the more he feels he is a success. However, a Karmi considers accumulation of wealth as a sign of great success. Karma Yogi is glorified as he gives away everything. The essence of Gita is found in reversing the word to read Tagi or Tyagi. All people who take in more and share less are great sinners. One is a sensualist who is given to sensory pleasures. Such a person lives in vain. Eating, drinking and procreating cannot be considered as great achievements. Having

many children is also not a great achievement. All these actions, animals also perform very well. Real accomplishments are achieved in field of dharma and moksha. Life of a sensualist is a useless one. He does not contribute anything to society. Many animals are useful alive and even in death. Humans while living are useless and so are they even after death. Life is useful only when I share and thus get Dharma and Moksha.

Shloka # 17:

आत्मैवात्मनो भक्त्या तृप्तो भवति धर्मकर्मण्युत्तमैः ।

आत्मैवात्मनो भक्त्या तृप्तो भवति धर्मकर्मण्युत्तमैः 3.17

For the man who delights solely in the Self, who is content with the Self, who finds satisfaction alone in the Self, there is no duty to perform.

In following two verses Sri Krishna talks of the benefits of Karma Yoga. Karma Yoga is not an end in itself. It is not an ultimate Sadhana. It cannot give us liberation or self-knowledge. Yet, at the same time, it is extremely important in beginning stages as it alone can give purity of mind. Karma Yoga will not lead to Moksha. After contributing to society and purifying the mind one has to go from Karma Yoga to Self-enquiry. Our problem now is self-ignorance, hence, we have to withdraw.

Follow karma yoga; purify the mind and grow out of karma yoga and go to the next stage of spiritual sadhana; it is like a child entering the womb of the mother and for nine months the child remains in the womb and then comes out. If it stays in the womb longer, it becomes a problem for both mother and child. In the same manner karma yoga is like the womb to purify the mind during Brahmacharya and Grihastha ashrama and later one goes to Vanaprastha and Sanyasa ashrama or grows out of activity. After Karma Yoga or purification of mind one grows out

of activity and begins Nivriti or withdrawal. He starts asking who am I? What is life? What is my nature? Why this human struggle? Then, in Gyana yoga via Sravanam, Mananam and Nidhidhyasanam discovers the real I. Discovery of complete Self is Gyana Yoga. Only then struggle of life will be over. Consider the example of Puri in oil. It runs around in oil until it fluffs up. Once the Puri is full blown it is Poornathvam. Gyana is incomplete without Karma yoga. Without Karma Yoga, Gyana Yoga is not possible.

Sri Krishna now discusses the essence of Gyana Yoga.

Dayananda Saraswathi used to say:” Problem is you. Solution is you too.”

Changing things outside is not going to help. Everything is inside us. This intelligent person comes to self-enquiry. He then makes the pleasant discovery that whatever I am seeking, I am it. Security, peace, and all basic needs of life are all in me. What is his nature? So, previously he was happy because of external conditions, after self-knowledge, he is happy, not because of external factors, he is happy because that is his very nature. He has discovered himself as the infinite. Even people who are number # 1 in their field, if you ask them, even they will tell you they want to exceed even more. In self-knowledge this problem is not there anymore. He is self-sufficient. He is not dependent on outside sources. There is no struggle. Whatever he does is out of fulfillment. Most of us act out of a need for fulfillment.

At present, I am incomplete. My action is not enjoyable. There is tension, there is anxiety, and this is Samsara. Action out of fulfillment (poornathvam) is like bathroom singing or is also called Lela. For a Gyani everything is a Leela or action out of fulfillment.

Shloka # 18:

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3.19

Therefore, unattached, always do the work that has to be done; for doing work with detachment, man attains the Supreme.

Sri Krishna tells Arjuna “ Arjuna, you must have emotional independence. It can only happen by Self-discovery. Independence requires self-knowledge. Self-knowledge requires freedom from Raga and Dvesha (happiness or unhappiness with the external world).

Misunderstood I is source of unhappiness. Understood “I” is source of happiness. Until I recognize this there will be delusion. This delusion goes away through Karma Yoga.

The path is:

Karma Yoga: Purification of mind

Gyana Yoga: Discover Self sufficiency and Be Free.

Sri Krishna says, Arjuna, start following Karma Yoga right now, by following your duty. Here Arjuna’s Karyam is to live in the present doing what he has to, without anxiety of the future or brooding over the past. If you keep doing what you have to, with a healthy attitude, you will ultimately attain Moksha. So, Arjuna, go and fight, do your duty.

Take away from the class:

Swamiji reminded us, again and again, that the essence of Karma yoga is giving. All of us need to give more than we take.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Gurupurnima Lecture

The discussion was about Advaitam (Ad), Vasishthadwaitam (Va) and Dwaitam (Dw)—majority of Hindus follow one of these Darshans.

The three Darshans do not have the same goal.

Jiva is atom according to Va and Dw. But Ad says it is Sarvagathaha.

Iswara Swarupam is Saguna according to Va and Dw. But Ad says it is Nirguna.

Jagat is different according to Va and Dw. But Ad says there is no Jagat at all

Bhandaha —according to Va, I am dependant as Dasa eternally.

But Dw says Bondage is a misconception

Ad says it is a misconception I am a Dependent—I am a Swami—Soham

For our intellect we have to accept one path.

Ad does not look upon Va and Dw as opposed to it but as promoters—at the end Va and Dw is rejected.

All seekers are at the level of:

Mandha Adhikari— good student

Madhya Adhikari—better student

Uthama Adhikari—best student

Dw takes a student from Mandha to Madhya. Va takes a student from Madhya to Uthama.

Uthama will have intellect to appreciate teaching of Ad.

In short, Dw looks at Jiva and Jagat as two separate entities.

Va looks at Jiva as a small part of God and Jagat is different

Ad says Everything is Brahman– Aham Brahmasmi

Thanks

Ramanathan

Upadesha Saram, Class 8

Greetings All,

Shloka 15 and 16:

15: “For the exalted Yogi abiding steadily in the natural state, having destroyed the mind, is there any action left?”

16: “When the mind turns away from the objects, it beholds its source, Consciousness. This is Self –abidance.”

Continuing his teaching of Upadesha Saram, and refreshing our memory of last class, Swami Paramarthananda said, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi enumerated various spiritual sadhanas all of which result in Bodhaha or Gyanam. They are: Puja, Japa, Dhyana, Samadhi, Yoga and Gyanam. All of them have the one aim that one’s mind should be absorbed in one’s Self. Problematic mind should be replaced by a non-problematic mind. The Mithya mind should be replaced. This fundamental reality is arrived at by enquiry as discussed in shlokas 14, 15 and 16 respectively. This enquiry negates everything negatable. What ultimately remains after negating is that the mind becomes blank. It is at this time the Guru’s direction is needed. He will point out that the blankness is witnessed by an awareness called Consciousness also called Chaitanyam. It has all the attributes of the Atma namely: it is Nithyaha, Akarta, abhokata, Nirvikara, Aprameya etc. This is the real me. This is Tatva Darshanam or recognizing the real me. This is known

as Vichara Marga. Through this Vichara the Mithya of mind is recognized and thus removed.

Shlokas 17 and 18:

17: "What is the mind? If one searches to find out, then, there would be no separate entity as the mind. This is the straight path."

18: "The mind is only a bundle of thoughts. They are dependent on the "I" thought. Know the I thought to be the mind."

In shlokas # 17 and 18, respectively, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi elaborates on Gyanam.

Summarizing these two shokas, Swamiji says, this Vichara is presented in three different ways.

First enquiry is an enquiry into the nature of the mind or Mano Vichara. Here one asks "what is the nature of this mind"? Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi points out that mind is nothing other than Ahamkara. So this then becomes Ahamkara Vichara. Still later he points out that Ahamkara Vichara is finding out the Source of Ahamkara. Since the Source is the Atma, it now becomes Atma Vichara.

Thus:

Mano Vichara>Ahamkara>Ahamkaravichara>Atma Vichara>Atma.

Shloka # 17:

Animals do not have a developed mind. They don't have Raga, Dvesha, Krodha etc., We do not know if the mind is an advantage to human beings or not. In sleep there is no mind. Upon waking, it comes up again.

Swamiji says, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi through out his teachings does not mention the role of Guru or Shastras. We

have to add that ourselves.

Upon enquiry into the mind we find that there is no such thing as the mind at all. We have been bothered about something that does not exist. It is a Mithya. It is something that exists without substance like a mirage. Examples of such mirages are:

- Mirage of water
- Dream problems disappear when I wake up.
- Existence of thought. Upon enquiry we find there is no such thing called thought. Thus, while Pot is the weight-less word, Clay alone is the substance with weight. I have been taking the pot for granted. Similarly, we have also been taking it for granted that there is a mind.

Thus, materials have particles, which break into atoms, further break into subatomic particles and finally break into energy. Thus, there is no world other than energy. That this energy manifests itself as this tangible world is one of the greatest wonders of the world. A Nonexistent mind seems to exist. Anything seemingly existent should be negated. There is nothing called mind. Vichara Marga is the only appropriate Marga. The unreal is born out of ignorance. Knowledge alone can remove ignorance. The rope snake can only be removed by knowledge of the rope. Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi says the mind has to be handled only by Gyanam. The ultimate solution is Gyanartham Vichara. This alone removes the problematic mind.

In the next shloka Ahamkara Vichara is discussed.

Shloka # 18:

The primary constituent or ingredient of the mind is thought. We experience mind only as thought. When we sleep, thought is dormant and mind is temporarily gone.

So, for all practical purposes, mind equates to thought. In reality, however, thought is not the mind. It is only a

function of the mind. I am not just teaching. It is only one of my functions. So also it is with walking. For all practical purposes we can say mind equals thought or Manovichara is thought Vichara. Thoughts are classified into two categories:

- Objective thoughts or Idam Vrithi or thoughts about objects. Objects can be anything such as a river, mountain, a pen etc. Vrithi means thought.
- Subject related thought or Aham Vrithi. This is about "I" the experiencer.

Idam Vrithi's are many while Aham Vrithi is only one. For each Idam Vrithi there is a corresponding Aham Vrithi.

Thus, Objective thoughts + Subjective thought = Mind.

Objective thoughts can exist only if there is a subject to relate to. Therefore, the subject is the basis for all objective experiences. Aham Vrithi is basis for all Idam Vrithi. Thus, the essence of all Idam Vrithi is Aham Vrithi. All objectives are about Aham Vrithi. Thus, all thoughts can be reduced to the "I" thought. I thought is Ahamkara.

Thus:

Mind enquiry>thought enquiry> "I" thought enquiry>Ahamkara enquiry.

Explaining shloka # 18 further, Mind is nothing but a group of thoughts. All thoughts of mind are based upon one essential thought, Aham Vrithi or the one I thought.

May you understand that the mind is nothing but the "I" thought or Ahamkara. Therefore, mind enquiry is Ahamkara enquiry.

Shlokas 19 and 20:

19: Wherefrom does this "I" thought arise? If one enquires thus, it vanishes. This is self-enquiry.

20: When the I thought perishes, then another I, I, springs forth as the Heart, spontaneously. It is Existence in all its fullness.

We have said Mind is Ahamkara. So Ahamkara enquiry is to be performed. Where does Ahamkara come from? What is the source of Ahamkara? This is the real enquiry.

Shloka #19:

From where does Aham come into being? On enquiry we find it comes from Atma. So it is called Atma Vichara. You enquire about the rope not the snake. It is not an enquiry into the snake, as it is not born out of the rope. Here Aham is compared to the snake while Atma is compared to the rope. Therefore, it is Atmavichara or enquiry as to what is the Atma? Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi does not explain how we should perform this Atma Vichara. We have to add that it is to be performed as per Guru or Shashtra's direction. All Upanishads require this.

For such a person, the wonder is that Ahamkara falls. Aham is a false reflected consciousness. Citing an example swamiji says, imagine a mirror. I am standing in front of it. I see my reflection in the mirror. So we now have three entities. The mirror, the reflection and I. The reflected entity has properties of me, as well as properties of the mirror. It is a hotch potch. Everything that is a reflection is borrowed from my body as well as from the mirror. If the mirror is dull the reflection is dull as well, a feature of the mirror. This third identity is called Prathibimba Purusha. If you, the person, or the mirror is not present, the third entity disappears. So it is with Atma and Anatma (mirror). While Ahamkara is the third entity (mixture of Aham and Anatma). When you remove either Atma or Anatma, the third entity, Ahamkara, disappears. This non-entity, Ahamkara, has been the cause of a lot of havoc in all of us.

A false thing becomes real. Self-enquiry dispels Ahamkara or the false thing. What is Self Enquiry? That which leads to discovery of Atma (the real I) and fall of the mind is Self-enquiry or Manonashaha. The fall occurs from the recognition that Ahamkara is Mithya. Even after the fall, the reflection still continues. But now, it no more frightens me. Be it a convex or a concave mirror, neither bother me.

So Gyani still experiences Ahamkara even after knowing it is unreal. Ahamkara nasha is knowing it is unreal.

Shloka 20:

When Ahamkara falls the chiddabasha is dismissed as Mithya. Even after reflection goes away the original face continues. The only problem is, it cannot be objectified anymore. I own up to the original Consciousness when the reflection is destroyed.

Explaining the shloka, when Ahamkara suffers destruction and the reflected face is gone. The original face still continues. The original face cannot, however be seen anymore.

One can see the reflected face, when mirror is there. Swamiji suggested that we try to discover our original face for the rest of our respective lives.

Atma cannot be made into an object. So this consciousness remains as the real I. Now, after knowledge, the consciousness shines as the real I.

Ahami means the " I". This is also called self-effulgent. This I is not located anywhere. It is all pervading. It is unconditionally full and infinite.

Parampurna means beyond space and time.

With Best Wishes.

Ram Ramaswamy

Kaivalya Upanishad

Namaste:

Please click on the link below for my notes on Kaivalya Upanishads. These notes are based on the teachings of Swami Paramarthananda.

Notes-KaivalyaUpanishad

Bagawat Geeta, Class 41

Greetings All,

Shloka # 13:

“कर्मणो यो नान्तरहितो भवेत्सुखदुःखेषु च
सर्वेषु च समो भवेत्सुखदुःखेषु च
सर्वेषु च समो भवेत्सुखदुःखेषु च
सर्वेषु च समो भवेत्सुखदुःखेषु च”

कर्मणो यो नान्तरहितो भवेत्सुखदुःखेषु च
सर्वेषु च समो भवेत्सुखदुःखेषु च
सर्वेषु च समो भवेत्सुखदुःखेषु च
सर्वेषु च समो भवेत्सुखदुःखेषु च 3.13”

Continuing his teaching and refreshing our memory of last class, Swami Paramarthananda says, Lord Krishna was looking at Karma Yoga from different angles. He says Karma yoga is a way of life.

The first angle was that of a commandment of lord. If a person does not follow it, he incurs Pratyavaya Papam.

The second angle was as a request to lead a life of harmony. I have given you a world that is in harmony. You should maintain harmony for the sake of other living beings. It is a form of gratitude to the Lord or Ishwara Yagya.

The third angle is not Agya or Yagya but as a spiritual Sadhana by which I purify my mind. I am not doing any favor to the Lord. I am favoring myself. The benefit described in shloka # 13 is that, one who looks at the consequences of worship of God as yagya prasada, for such a person, all papam's of inner personality goes away. The consequence of worship can be in the form of food that remains after a Yagya or even can be taken as Karma Phalam.

As per Vedas, anything that obstructs Self- Knowledge is considered a Papam. Even money is a Papam, if I am lost in it. On the other hand, poverty is considered good, if it leads one to spirituality.

What is primary obstruction to spirituality? As per Vedanta, it is Mohaha or delusion. It means seeing the external world as the cause of happiness or unhappiness.

If a particular music is played, a teenager is very happy while his parents are unhappy. They don't like it at all. So, is the music the source of happiness or unhappiness? As long as you are finding fault with the world you are in delusion. This delusion has to go away. It is my attitude towards the world that causes sorrow or happiness. It is not a change in the world but a change in my attitude that is required. Knowledge alone changes my attitude. Once I search for knowledge it makes me a seeker.

Shankaracharya's Bhaja Govindam is called Moha Mudgara (Hammer to shatter illusion). Here he analyzes all causes of happiness and unhappiness. He discusses all aspects of delusion. Only Karma Yoga can remove delusion. What is required is knowledge, not changing of the world.

In shloka # 13, Sri Krishna criticizes those who are selfish, who cook only for themselves and don't share the food. Pancha Maha Yagya requires sharing my money or food with others. Every day when you cook rice keep some aside (raw rice) and donate it every month. Give to others, exhorts Swamiji. Such

selfish people are eating concentrated papam. They are moving away from spiritual knowledge.

Shloka # 14:

“ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.१४ ॥”

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.१४ ॥”

In previous shloka Karma Yoga was shown as a purifier. We have seen Agya, Yagya, and Chitta Shodhakam as different versions of Karma Yoga. Now, Sri Krishna describes a fourth angle to Karma Yoga. Here Karma Yoga is presented as Dharma.

What is dharma? That which maintains the harmony of the creation is called Dharma. We are not isolated beings; we are all integrated and interconnected with other beings. Beings include humans, animals, plants, rivers etc. As said before all beings, other than humans, are programmed to live in harmony. Only human beings have been given free will and budhi shakthi. Humans can destroy this world or create a heaven out of it. If earth is destroyed, it will be due to human beings alone. Even a tiger cannot do it, but humans can do it.

Arjuna, you may not believe in God or my commandment, even then you have to lead a life of Karma Yoga to maintain harmony of this creation. Science shows we are all interconnected. Sri Krishna says, everything that happens in creation is cyclical, indicating harmony. Thus, we have the Water cycle, Carbon dioxide cycle etc., all required for conservation of matter and energy. Sri Krishna then cites one such cycle as an example.

All living beings are born out of food. Food in turn comes out of rain. Rain comes from Yagya, also called adrishtam, the invisible favorable factor. Yagya can also be called Punyam or Apoorvam. How can Punyam produce rain? Punyam is nothing but cosmic balance or harmony. Only in balance does rain come. Rain is considered an acid test for ecological balance. When we cut trees, the balance is lost. How to maintain this

balance? Sri Krishna says, one maintains this balance only by Karma Yoga. In Karma Yoga, by revering creation, by revering nature, balance is maintained. I should avoid disturbing the harmony. Some serve by doing, while others serve by non-interference. Don't interfere by polluting nature.

Vedas even tells us how to use a tank or river. One should pray to the river first. Then, enter the river. One should not pollute the river by urinating etc., in it. Do not spit. Respect the river, ocean, air and fire. A life of reverence will maintain the cosmic balance. Even if one person has this reverence, rains will come for him. This reverence is called Karma Yoga.

Therefore, food comes from rain, rain comes from harmony and harmony comes from Karma Yoga.

My very existence and I come from Karma. Karma is also born out of me. So, we have to keep contributing to society. Live a life of contribution.

Karmabhutaha means Karma is born out of living beings.

Shloka # 15:

"ॐ सर्वं भूयते ॥ भवतु कर्मणो भवतु च ॥"

ॐ सर्वं भूयते ॥ भवतु कर्मणो भवतु च ॥ 3.15 ॥"

How do you know which karma maintains balance and which violates balance? Human beings have a limited intellect. We do not always know what is good or bad for humanity. We produced PFC's, refrigerants that react and delete the ozone layer. Ozone protects us from UV rays of the sun. Similarly, with increase of cars it causes green house gases that in turn melt the polar ice cap increasing the flooding of our shorelines. We do not see the connection between increased cars on the roads and our receding shorelines. This is because of the limited capacity of our minds.

Shastras say do not depend on human intellect rather depend on scriptures. Scripture is not a product of human beings. They are revelations to Rishi's. So, follow the life style prescribed by scriptures says, Sri Krishna. We have been using Tulasi leaf, neem leaf etc for a long time while now Americans are taking patents on them. Sri Krishna says, harmonious life is taught by Vedas.

In this shloka, Brahma means Vedas.

The question comes how do Vedas know? Sri Krishna says, Vedas are not a product of human intellect. They have withstood the test of time. They can stand the challenge of science as well. A defect in Vedas is we do not understand them well enough. Coconut oil was once criticized and today it is praised. It is the same with Ghee.

Vedas have come out of Aksharam or Ishwara.

Then, how come we say Rishi's gave us the Vedas? Rishi's have served as a medium to receive Vedic knowledge. Just as a TV is a receiver, so also Rishi's were receivers. To receive such knowledge one has to prepare our self by Tapas or Dhyanam. So, study Vedas and get its benefits.

Take away from this class:

Swamiji says, it is not a change in the world but a change in my attitude that is required.

This is a topic often discussed by Vedanta group. How can we impact the world? Vedanta says, rather than focusing on changing the world we should focus on changing our self or our attitude to the world.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Upadesa Saram, Class 7

Greetings All,

Shloka # 13:

“Control of the mind is of two kind, its lulling and its destruction. A lulled mind will rise again but not the one which is destroyed.”

Continuing his teaching, Swami Paramarthananda says, we have seen Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi talking about the six Sadhanas. They are: Puja, Japa, Dhyanam, Samadhi, Yoga and Gyanam. Samadhi is also called Bhakthi. The first four Sadhanas were discussed elaborately. Now he is dealing with Yoga and Gyanam. Yoga represents Ashtanga Yoga. However, Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi focuses on Pranayama. The eight steps of ashtanga yoga are: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi focuses on Pranayama. Pranayama restrains the mind, like a cage restrains a bird. This subsiding of mind is called Manolaya (withdrawal or shanthi). However, Manolaya is a temporary restrain on the mind, it comes back after some time in even greater force. The permanent solution to the problematic mind is Mano Nasha. Mano Nasha can only happen through Gyanam. Thus:

Mano laya occurs through Pranayama.

Mano nasha occurs though Gyanam.

The temporarily suppressed mind, mano laya, comes back again as in artificial sleep. Once we come out of sleep the whole world comes back again.

The mind destroyed by Gyana Yoga will never raise its head again. Pranayama can be used but only as a first aid. First aid is important in an accident. However, after first aid, one may still need to get further treatment. One cannot replace the other. Pranayama is not an end in itself. It is in Atma Gyanam alone that one can obtain permanent peace of mind.

Shloka # 14:

“The mind stilled by breath regulation gets destroyed by pursuing a single thought.”

Manonasha, should not be taken as its literal translation means. It does not mean a Gyani's mind is destroyed. Gyani's have very good mind with all virtues. Gita elaborates on a Gyani's mind in chapters 13 and 14 respectively. So, a Gyani possess a mind. His mind is not destroyed. If so, what is Manonasha? There are two important meanings. One is figurative and the other is philosophical (shastriya).

Figurative meaning of Manonasha: The problematic mind is destroyed and replaced by a beautiful mind. Deluded, ignorant mind is destroyed and is replaced by a healthy mind. When a mind is healthy, you don't feel its presence. When a body is not healthy, you feel the pain. You don't feel the pain when it is healthy.

Philosophical meaning of Manonasha: is the real meaning. In wake of knowledge, the Anatma Prapancha is understood. Gyani understands “Brahma Satyam, Jagat Mithya.” Mithya prapancham whether it is or it is not, does not make a difference to him. In a Gyani's mind the entire world is destroyed.

Once the world is falsified, mind is also falsified with it. Mind is after all a small part of this world. This understanding of the unreality of mind is called Mano Nasha. Gyani still employs his mind, understanding that the body, mind and the world are all Mithya. Just as it is only the clay in the pot, there is nothing called pot that exists. The Pot

has only a verbal existence (nama, roopa) so also does the mind. It too has only a verbal existence that is its nama and roopa.

Using Pranayama one quits the mind and it obtains the sadhana chatushtaya sampanam. Gyanam, however, comes from the Eka Chintanam or thinking of non-dual atma. How to perform this chintanam has not been mentioned here. Thus, a cult of Maharishi Bhagawan Ramana's followers has formed around the "Who am I" meditation? This is an unfortunate conclusion. Here tradition has to be exerted. Asking, "who am I" will not help. Before, he was a turbulent Agyani, now, he becomes a quiet Agyani.

In Gita, Atma Vichara has been described. It says, go to an acharya and ask for the teaching. This is the only method of Self Knowledge. The teaching must be for a length of time. Pundaka Upanishad mentions that Self-enquiry should only be through a Guru. Even if some have got knowledge without a Guru, even they have had a Guru in past life. That knowledge is activated in this life.

So, this means Sravanam, Mananam, and Nidhidhyasanam from a Guru. This is called Chintanam. Through this teaching, knowledge dawns. It will inform me of: "Brahma Satyam, Jagat Mithya". The mind is always unreal. It cannot touch me, the real consciousness. This wisdom is called ManoNashaha.

Shloka # 15:

"For the exalted Yogi abiding steadily in the natural state, having destroyed the mind, is there any action left?"

Once mind is falsified, the rest of life is a peaceful one. Mind and its conditions have nothing to do with my freedom. Mithya cannot tarnish Sathyam. Quality of my mind has nothing to do with my Poornathavam.

After Atma Gyanam, conditions of Anatma cannot alter my

status. It does not mean we are now careless. We will still put out the best. The physical and mental conditions have no consequence with respect to my freedom. A Gyani is not careless with respect to the body or the mind. He knows in his heart of heart that condition of mind does not matter. This is called Jivan Mukti. So, the supreme Yogi who has reached the destination is called Utkrishta Yogi. His mind is falsified. Vyavaharika Satyam of mind does not disturb the "Atma" within me.

What is to be accomplished in life by such a Yogi? He is without the pressures of life whipping him into activity. For a normal man each activity has to be completed and then he moves to the next one. Swamiji met the father of a devotee, an old man. He very emotionally asked Swamiji's blessing that his grand daughter get married while he was still living. He was very emotional about it. So, a man gets whipped into action based upon one's emotions.

What is Moksha? As per Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi, it means, I am full and complete, with no more desires. He abides in his own swaroopam. All duties reside in Ahamkara. It can never complete its duties. One who transcended Ahamkara has obtained Moksha.

Shloka # 16:

"When the mind turns away from the objects, it beholds its source, Consciousness. This is Self-Abidance."

In this shloka the process of Atma Gyanam is described. The mind is turned away from external objects, which includes the body and mind. Once mind is turned away from the external world, what remains is the mind in Chaitanyam, without any objects or objectless consciousness remains. Blank mind is empty consciousness. It is a Consciousness without any objects. We recognize the mind is blank. The blankness is illumined by our awareness. A blank mind is one in which there is only consciousness and no other object. This remainder Consciousness, objectless consciousness, is our real nature.

It has all properties of Atma (Nithyaha, Shaswatha, Purnaha, Nirvikaraha, Aprameya, Akartha, Abhoktha etc.). This has to be understood as “I” the Atma. This is understanding of one’s self as the “Remainder” consciousness. This is the knowledge of one’s own real nature or Tatva Darshanam. This is the truth. This consciousness is ever self-evident. This Gyanam is further elaborated upon now.

Shlokas 14-16 is a condensed version of Gyanam.
Shlokas 17- end are an elaboration of Gyanam.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 40

Greetings All,

Shloka # 11:

“कर्मणो यो नान्तरहितो भवेत्सुखदुःखेषु च
सर्वेषु समो भवेत्सुखदुःखेषु च ॥३.११॥”

Continuing his teaching of Gita and recapping last week’s lesson, Swami Parmarthananda said, Sri Krishna is looking at Karma Yoga from different angles. The general definition of Karma Yoga is:

Proper Action + Proper Attitude=Karma Yoga

Proper action means giving more and taking less. It also implies self-less action.

Selfish action and selfless actions both are allowed, however,

selfless action should predominate in life. Harmful action, however, is to be totally avoided. The attitude must be appropriate. Dedicating selfless actions and selfish actions with an attitude of Devarpanam to God and anything I receive in life must be with Prasada Budhi.

Sri Krishna is looking at it from different angles.

First angle is as a commandment from God. If a person refuses a life of Karma Yoga then he gets Pratyavaya Papam, a special papam, where he is imprisoned in Samsara. So, out of fear, one should follow Karma Yoga.

Second angle is one of love and worship. Swamiji says, in the first angle fear is used, but fear is not a healthy emotion. Fear is the darkroom in which all negatives are developed. Psychologists say, " Never try to discipline your children through fear". In fear a child's mind will not grow. They end up becoming terrible fathers, husbands, and teachers. In such cases it is the mistake of the parents who raised them in fear. In extreme cases punishment may be used, but as per Shastra's it is to be used sparingly.

Sri Krishna also used fear, as a method, to follow Karma Yoga. He, however, prefers love and worship rather than fear. Karma Yoga performed out of love is called Yagna. What God has given you, this body, this life etc., is his gift. When we get a gift we should reciprocate. What you do with the God's gift is your gift to the Lord. The body is a gift. I can enjoy the body living a life of indulgence or I can use it for Paropkara. Trees produce lot of fruits, as a gift. Even if one throws stones at them they still keep giving their fruits. The cow produces milk all for sacred purposes, our coffee and our tea. The rivers carry water, all for blessing the society. From looking at nature, we can easily understand why God has given this body; therefore "Paropkarartham Idam Shariram". It means this body's purpose is to help others. Therefore, when I utilize my body to serve the world; when I utilize the mind to

follow dharma.

Follow Karma Yoga and God will grant you all blessings.

Swamiji points out that a question can come up. When I perform action I will get the Karma Phalam. Why should I ask God for the Phalam?

The answer is, phalam is the result of my work. I have worked hard for it. However, per scriptures phalam is per nature's laws. Citing an example, a microphone was discovered because the law for such a device was already present in nature. Human intellect discovered TV, but its mind cannot discover these natural laws. God has given us intellect. He has given us natural laws. My glory is only to tap into such a law. When you tap into such a law, please thank that God. Hence we thank God when we eat. Why do we do this? After all, I have worked for it, right? The production of food is possible due to laws created by God. Just remember God for a few minutes. Even our physical health is based on bio-chemical laws. The food is digested, transported and waste removed. Every disease is possible due to bio chemical laws. When my body temperature rises it is due to a natural law to fight a disease. I have never produced any law. I am only tapping into a law. Never forget this. If you do, you are a thief. Hence you should worship Devathas. If you don't thank them, you are an ungrateful person. It is the worst kind of papam. Ungratefulness has no Prayaschittam. Even in western cultures that is why you thank some one.

Citing another example Swamiji says he read recently that many temples have lands and properties assigned to them so that the temple can be maintained. However, unscrupulous people rent temple lands for one paisa. They are educated people too and they are abusing it. Many have not even paid their rent in a long time. Sri Krishna says one who enjoys without reciprocity such a person is a thief.

In our culture, whatever we cook, we should offer it as a Naivedyam or as an acknowledgement. It is not an offering. God

does not take it anyway. He just wants thanks.

In Hinduism every moment of our life is a life of reverence. Others have secular work and non-secular work. In Hinduism every action is sacred action. Every car driver before starting his journey prays; before starting construction of a building a Bhumi puja is performed. Swamiji says Non-reverential work is Karma while reverential work is Karma Yoga.

Shloka # 13:

“ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.१३ ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.१३ ॥

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.१३ ॥”

“ Good men who partake of what remains after offering sacrifices are liberated from all sins; whereas the sinners who cook for their own sake live on their sins”.

Sri Krishna now looks at karma yoga from a third angle.

The first angle was as God’s commandment

The second angle was as God’s worship or Yagna.

The third angle is as a spiritual purifier or Chitta Shodhakam.

A seeker of moksha can appreciate this angle. When I am a seeker, there is only one path and that is by Atma Gyanam. Without this Gyanam I cannot obtain Moksha. Gyanam occurs only with mental purity. That is why before installing a God in temple purification is performed. Similarly, before study of scriptures one has to go through Upanayanam; to cleanse the body and mind to install the Veda Mantra; else I will pollute the Vedas. Upanayanam is very important for Vedic chanting. Even a pucca Brahmin cannot learn Vedas without Upanayana samskara. To paint a wall one has to sandpaper the wall first. Atma Gyanam occurs only when Kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada

and matsarya (lust, anger, greed, illusion, pride and envy) are removed. So, Karma yoga is the sand paper to cleanse the mind. The seeker of Karma Yoga is not interested in material prosperity. The whole world may consider him a failure because it considers material prosperity as the basis of success. Karma Yogi does not consider material success as important. His focus is on inner purification irrespective of whether material prosperity comes or not. Hence the shloka:

Isvararpitam necchaya krrtam
cittasodhakam muktisadhakam

If you dedicate your life to the Lord, and if you consider material prosperity as Subservient to spiritual growth then your karma yoga will lead to mental purity.

This mental purity may promote mukti sadakam. And therefore the third angle is Karma Yoga as an inner purifier. And that is why we say there is no failure in karma yoga.

Failure is usually in terms of material accomplishments. In karma Yoga inner purification takes place irrespective of material prosperity.

And therefore Krishna says, those people who convert their life into worship, receive the consequences as Ishwaraprasada or as yajna shistam. Yajna Shistam means left over from Yajna or Ishwaraprasada. Thus, one who considers all the karma phalams as yajna shistam (prasada) and eats it (means enjoy it), such a person becomes free from all the papams.

Citing an example, suppose you buy a book, and something is written on the book, the book is called a second hand book. The same second hand book signed by a mahatma becomes very valuable.

So if you do not offer to the Lord and enjoy without offering to the Lord, without acknowledging the Lord's grace; it is papam. Even medicine is a law of the Lord, if a medicine has a curing property, it is God's gift; therefore I consume

medicine as Ishwara Prasada. If you do not do that, Sri Krishna says you are a papi.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Upadesa Saram, Class 6

Greetings All,

Shloka 7 and 8.

Shloka # 7: "Constant , natural meditation like the steady flow of ghee or a stream of water is better than intermittent contemplation."

Shloka #8: "The meditation "I am that" regarded as more purifying than one based on dualistic thought."

Refreshing our memory of the last class Swami Paramathananda said Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi is dealing with a variety of spiritual exercises in his teachings. He discussed three of them namely Kayika, Vachika and Manasa Karmani. Thus:

Kayika relates to performing Puja.

Vachika relates to performing Japa.

Manasa relates to Dhyanam or Upanam.

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi classifies Dhyanam or Upanam into two types. They are:

- Bheda Upanam
- Abheda Upanam also known as Ahamgraha Upanam. Ahamgraha literally means "self-grasping," or "self-identification."

Bheda Upsana: Elaborating on this upsana, Swamiji says, in this Upasana God is different from me. Upasaka Upasya bheda exists. After Bheda Upsana one moves to Abheda Upasana. Here you visualize God as myself in Soham Bhava. There is nothing wrong in this Upasana as God can be invoked in any object. Even as God is invoked in a Saligramam, or a mound of Turmeric so also one can invoke God in himself, as well. This is Abheda Upsana. It is superior to Bheda Upsana.

Abheda Upasana: is the stepping-stone for Vedanta. Here, one has to know "I am God". Abheda Upasana is an ideal intermediary phase between Bheda Upasana and Vedanta. The transition from duality to Advaita is not easy. One should practice saying "I am Lord". Every time puja is performed, the priest in his mantras offers puja to himself as well. The priest reminds us that there is no difference between God and me. Abheda Upsana is superior to Bheda Upasana.

Shlokas 9 and 10:

Shloka # 9:

"The repose of being poised in one's true nature, devoid of thoughts, is the highest devotion. It comes from the strength of meditation."

Shloka # 10:

"Sinking of the mind in the heart, its source, is Action. Devotion, Union and Knowledge."

The possible culmination of any meditation (Bheda or Abheda) is Samadhi. Samadhi means absorption in object of meditation. I forget myself as meditator. One does not know he is meditating. This is similar to when the Waker is so absorbed in the dream world that he forgets that he is the projector of the dream. The dream becomes real to him. This is due to a natural propensity of the mind to do so; that is absorption leading to forgetfulness. This is also called Nirvikalpa Samadhi. The difference between meditator and meditated is

lost. Subject object difference is lost. Vidyaranya defines Samadhi as forgetting that I am the meditator.

The word Susthithi in shloka # 9 means getting lost in Soham Bhava. Here the absorption is total. All Bheda Bhavana is gone. Thoughts of all divisions are gone. In Gita Chapter 6, Sri Krishna compares this state to a flame that remains without a flicker. The mind remains in Abheda Vrithihi. In this state, the flow of advaitic thought excludes dvaitic thought. Swamiji cautioned that Advaita Gyanam is different from Abheda Upasana. So, how does this absorption come about? It comes from deliberate meditation (bhavana). Just repeating "Om Namaha Shivaya" will take us into this state of absorption. By regular practice it becomes spontaneous. The Samadhi is the greatest form of Bhakthi. Puja and Japa are all aspects of Bhakthi as well. Ramana Maharishi says Abheda Samadhi is the highest form of Bhakthi. I am absorbed in the Lord and he is in me. In this context Bhakthi is considered Samadhi.

Thus, so far, Ramana MahaRishi has spoken about four disciplines: They are Puja, Japa, Dhyanam, and Samadhi.

In the next shloka Ramana MahaRishi explains two more Sadhanas. They are Yoga and Gyanam.

Yoga: While Patanjali's yoga is referred to, the emphasis is on Pranayama as a spiritual discipline.

Gyanam: Here the term Bodha is used in shloka # 10 for Gyanam. It means Self-knowledge.

So the six disciplines now are: Puja, Japa, Dhyana, Samadhi, Yoga and Gyanam.

For all these disciplines there is only one goal. The goal is that the mind should abide in peace. This Shanthi-Sthithi is goal of all Sadhanas. Swamiji says, a question does come up, after practicing all these Sadhanas, how do I know if I am progressing spiritually? The acid test is obtaining mental

poise or shanthi. Even when Prarabhdam brings different experiences, maintain calmness amidst the turmoil. This is progress. Otherwise, it is not spiritual progress. Do I enjoy general equanimity at all times? Manaha Swastaha (shloka 10) means freedom from stress and abiding in my heart. Mind should have peace.

Shloka # 10:

“Sinking of the mind in the heart, its source, is Action. Devotion, Union and Knowledge.”

Bhagawan Ramana Maharishi has talked about six sadhanas. They are, Puja, Japa, dhyana, bhakthi (Samadhi), Yoga (Pranayama), and Bodhaha (Self knowledge). He discusses both Pranayama and Self Knowledge later.

Jivan Mukti is peace of mind alone. Swamiji says five of the six Sadhanas provide only a temporary peace of mind. Thus, all of them, except Bodha or Gyanam, provide a temporary peace of mind. Only with Atma Gyanam can we get permanent peace of mind.

Shloka # 11:

“ the mind becomes a quiescent by regulation of breath, like a bird caught in a net. This is a means of mind control.”

In shlokas 11 and 12 respectively Ramana Maharishi deals with Yoga. Yoga has many steps. Ramana Maharishi however highlights Vayu-rodhanam or regulation of breath. There are several types of Pranayama. They include: Puraka, Rechaka and Kumbhaka. Ramana Maharishi says Pranayama will make the mind quiet. Even science accepts this today. During stress, a deep breath brings down the body's toxic chemicals. Pranayama is highly recommended for stress. Even Readers digest had an article on this topic. Pranyama regulates Prana and mind. The Pancha Koshas are interconnected. Is it biochemistry that changes emotions or is it the other way around? Clearly, psychosomatic

diseases improve with Pranayama. When Prana is regulated Annamaya and Manomaya Kosha are improved as well.

Rodhana in shloka # 11 means regulate. Even a turbulent mind becomes quiet with deep breath. Pranayama is like a cage for a bird. Just as a cage arrests the movement of a bird so also Pranayama arrests movement of a mind. The term Jala-Pakshi Vada is used in the shloka to mean a net or a cage for a bird.

Shloka # 12:

“Minds and breaths, expressing themselves as Consciousness and Action, are only two branches of the same Primal Power.”

So, how does Prana control the mind? Answering, Prana and mind are like two branches of the same tree. When one branch is pulled the other branch also comes along. Citing another example, all four legs of a table are connected to a wooden plank. If you pull one leg of the table other three also follow. So also with Prana and Manas, both are connected to one Prakrithi. Prakrithi (Maya) is the cause of Prana (Rajo guna) and Manas (Sathva Guna).

Chitta Vayava in this shloka means mind and Prana. Chitta means Gyanam.

Shakyordvayi means two branches.

Shakthimulaka means Maya or Prakrithi or main trunk of the tree.

By controlling mind, Prana is also controlled. In a very emotional state the breath changes, it becomes shallow. If both can influence each other why should we regulate mind through Prana? Controlling the grosser Prana is easier than subtler mind. From gross one goes to the subtle. When Pranayama is not possible, only medicine can help. Drugs and liquor are all trying to control the gross and thus the mind.

Shloka # 13:

“Control of the mind is of two kinds, its lulling and its destruction. A lulled mind will rise again but not the one which is destroyed.”

Now Ramana MahaRishi enters the last Sadhana called Gyanam. Even yoga and pranayama can only make the mind quiet temporarily. After all one cannot practice Pranayama all the time. Pranayama is not the ultimate solution. It only manages the problematic mind. Only Gyanam will destroy the problematic mind. In this shloka, Mano-laya, means temporary lulling of mind. Manonasha is permanent destruction of problematic mind. Swamiji clarified destruction of problematic mind does not mean destruction of the mind itself.

Liquor, drugs and even Nirvikalpa Samadhi (where the mind disappears temporarily), are all considered Layam and they can tackle the Problematic mind temporarily. The only other method is permanent destruction of the “problematic mind”. This does not mean destruction of the mind itself. Mind is destroyed only in death. The “problematic mind” is however destroyed and replaced by a “compassionate” mind.

Laya gatham means the mind is temporarily lulled. The mind, however, continues to be problematic. The problematic mind is converted by wisdom. One sees the mind as Mithya. Once one sees the mind as Mithya it is a destroyed mind. Giving example in Tamil where seeing a wooden elephant one gets frightened, until one gets close by and sees it is not a real elephant. He sees it as a Mithya.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 39

Greetings All,

Shloka # 9:

सर्वकर्मण्येवाङ्गमयं कुरुष्वित् ॥ ३.९ ॥
सर्वकर्मण्येवाङ्गमयं कुरुष्वित् ॥ ३.९ ॥

“This world is bound by works other than those done as sacrifice, O son of Kunti. Free from attachment, do work as sacrifice.”

Recapping last week’s teachings Swami Paramarthananda said Sri Krishna discussed Karma yoga from different angles. Karma Yoga consists of two paths. The first is appropriate action and second is proper attitude.

Appropriate action: All Satvika karmani fall under appropriate action. In this, I contribute more to the world through performance of Pancha Maha Yagya’s or Proper Actions.

Proper Attitude:

- One should have Ishwara Arapana Budhi while performing proper actions.
- Consequences of actions are accepted without criticism with Prasada Budhi.

Thus, Proper Action + Proper Attitude= Karma Yoga.

Following are Sri Krishna’s commentary on Karma Yoga, looking at it from different angles.

First angle, it is a commandment of the Lord. Nobody can escape it. By Agya, if we do not follow Karma Yoga, we will get Pratyavaha Papam. If we do not perform Pancha Maha Yagya we will bring down our spirituality. Here Karma Yoga is presented as a threat and more for immature people. Citing an example, violating the law of the land results in police action. If people follow the law no police action is required.

So, here too, if people do not follow Karma Yoga the punishment is imprisonment in Samsara.

Second angle presented by Sri Krishna was that Karma Yoga is not a commandment; rather it is presented as a worship or expression of gratitude or love to God. The first angle was one of fear from which comes the saying "a God fearing person". In the second angle one follows not out of fear but out of gratitude. The more you enjoy the harmony of universe, the more you express gratitude.

Astronaut John Glenn, when he saw the world from far out in space, said " one who appreciates the creation, he cannot but believe in God, and he cannot but pray to Lord." Our morning worship is an appreciation of the universe and expression of gratitude for it. Even the opening of a tap for taking a bath results in an expression of gratitude for the glory of water. If you perform Sandhya Vandanam also you worship water. When they look for life, they look for water in a planet. I don't take Oxygen for granted either. Intense appreciation of the environment through fire worship, worship of water, worship of earth, worship of space etc., are all a part of Vedic religion. I don't have to produce or pollute. If I can maintain harmony, it is great.

Convert your life as an offering to me, as a Yagya.

If an action is not worship, it will cause bondage. Worship will liberate. It is similar to the poison of a cobra. It can be a killer or a savior, depends upon how you handle it. Action by itself does not cause bondage or liberation. It is our attitude that matters.

Thus,

Action + Devotion= Liberating factor.

Action-Devotion=Binding factor.

Action + Devotion=Yagya, a liberator

Action – Devotion=Karma, a binder.

Therefore, Arjuna may you do all your actions as a worship of

the Lord. Such action itself gives satisfaction.

That is why we use the expression: mamopatta-samastaduritaksaya-dvara sri-paramesvara-prityartham; It means: I am happy that I have done this as an offering to the Lord.

Swamiji says we are not supposed to expect appreciation. Shastra advises family members to appreciate the contribution of every member of family. Thus, a husband should appreciate his wife and she in turn should appreciate him as well. A teacher should not expect appreciation from his students. Rather, the students should appreciate the teacher. So, you have no rights. You only have duties. Our society is a duty based

Society. Dayananda Saraswathi said: "where duty is emphasized, humility will come. Where as, where right is emphasized, fight will come; court will come; divorce will come; all these things will come. Swamy Dayananda Saraswathi also used to say: "When you do your duty, others get their rights".

Shloka # 10:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.१० ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.१० ॥

"Bringing forth creatures together with sacrifice, the Lord of creatures said of old: multiply by means of sacrifices; let it yield whatever work you seek."

A life of sacrifice is prescribed by the vedas themselves for the harmony and progress of the society. Such a life of contribution; such a life of sacrifice; such a life of sharing called the Yagna way of life, is prescribed by the vedas themselves for our own benefit.

Swamiji says, the Vedas are for our own benefit. They are a like a manual. Just as a manufacturer's manual let's the customer know how to handle his product. It is meant for the user. The instruction on how to take a medicine, are on the

bottle. He who created the world was one with an extraordinary intelligence. Bhagawan has created this world and with it a manual on how to live in this world accomplishing Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Without this manual we will not know how to live in this world. So, Bhagavan gave us the Vedas. They preach a life of Yagya and with it you will prosper.

It is said that Prajapathi, Lord Brahma, created all living beings. He also created the human beings. He then called the human beings alone and gave them the Vedas. Vedas were not given to animals, as they don't have the free will to abuse. They follow dharma and harmony of creation. A forest is in harmony until humans enter it. It is the same with the ocean. They say there is a particular type of rodent species that once their population reaches a limit, some of the rodents will commit suicide as a way to limit the population. This is a way of sacrifice for the good of their society.

Therefore, God did not give Vedas to animals. For human beings it is a great blessing as well as a big curse. It depends on how we use it. Human beings can create their own heaven or hell.

A human being can lead an ideal life of giving and sharing, based upon freewill. Therefore humans can get the greatest benefit of moksha; or they can create a hell for themselves as well.

With life of Yagya, may you prosper. Swamiji then discussed a life of competition versus cooperation. In competition one does not share knowledge. One turns selfish. In cooperation, there is growth. That is why, even in sports, when there is heavy competition, there is cheating; use of drugs; all prompted by a desire to win. As per Veda's competition is a disease called matsaryam. Among the six evils of kamah, krodhah, lobhah, mohah, madah and matsaryah, matsaryah alone is the evil of competition. Veda's says competition should be

replaced by cooperation. I should be happy when the other person also thrives. In competition the worst instincts come out including qualities such as cheating.

Kamdhuk in the shloka means kamadhenu or one who fulfills all your desires. Swamiji says the human intellect is our Kamadhenu. We can accomplish anything with it. So, when we hear Vyasacharya could see the war, sitting in the palace, few people would have thought television was even possible. Now we have TV, internet, computers and many more.

All this (artha, kama, dharma)became possible due to applied human intelligence. Moksha also is possible with an intelligent way of living or by Karma Yoga. Vedas are not against material progress. If you are committed only to material progress without spiritual progress then you will not grow. We are a combination of Atma and Anatma. What is spiritual growth? It is the discovery that I am Atma, the substratum of everything. Materially you cannot expand beyond a certain limit, intellectually too one cannot expand beyond a certain limit. Spiritually, however, the possibility for growth is unlimited. And such a balanced pursuit of material well being (dharma-artha- kama) as well as self-knowledge is called Karma Yogaḥ.

Shloka # 11:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.११ ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.११ ॥

“By means of this sacrifice nourish the Devas; let the Devas nourish you. Mutually nourishing, may you win supreme good.”

Continuing his talk on Karma Yoga as Yagna, Sri Krishna says by following Karma Yoga Yagna, you are propitiating the gods of the creation; you are propitiating the devathas. Devathas are presiding over natural forces. Thus, Indira presides over rain and thunder and Varuna over the ocean. Nature is propitiated. Nature is not violated. In return Gods will bless us. Creation and we need not be inimical rather we should live

in cooperation. While Science wants to conquer nature, Vedas want the world and I to live in harmony. So, propitiate Gods. Gods will bless you with rains.

In the language of the Shastra's, every tree is like the body of the Lord and every river is compared to the blood vessels of the Lord. So, when you are polluting the river, you are polluting the blood of the Lord. When you are blocking the river, you are blocking the blood vessels of the Lord. So the ultimate message is respect nature; live in harmony with nature, live in ecological harmony; this is called Karma Yogaha.

Even Kalidasa in his composition mangalashtakam addresses nature. He addresses all the trees; offers prostrations to all the rivers; offers prostrations to all the plants; and says, I appreciate the role of everything and I take a vow that my life will be in harmony with nature

May you Propitiate Devathas. May you accomplish overall well being including dharma, artha, and kama. We have enough for everybody and nobody needs to starve, however, there is no proper distribution or sharing. People are obese in some countries. Overeating destroys you. There is enough for human need but not enough for human greed. Through Karma Yoga may you attain all Purushartha's.

With Best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Upadesa Saram, Class 5

Greetings All,

Shloka # 4: "Ritualistic worship, chanting and meditation are done with the body, voice and the mind; they excel each other in the ascending order."

Shloka # 5: "Worship of God in his eight fold form, understanding that He is so manifest, is proper worship of Him."

Recapping last class Swami Paramarthananda said Ramana Maharishi mentioned three types of Karmas that help inner growth. He broadly classified them as Kayika, Vachika and Manasa Karmani.

In shloka # 5 Kayika karma is defined as offering puja to God as it purifies a person. Two types of puja are mentioned.

First type of puja is a direct and formal puja performed in a room or in a temple following all rules of puja, as per shastras. This puja may also include Nithya Sandhya Vanadanam.

Second type of puja is indirect puja where everything I do, all my actions, is an offering to god, as a puja.

After that, in shloka # 6, Ramana MahaRishi describes Vachika Karmani or oral activities. They include Parayanam and Japam.

Parayanam:

The Parayanam can be Vedic or Non-Vedic. They can even be in any language such as Tamil, Malayalam etc. They all should, however, be glorifying God.

Japa:

Japa is taking God's name, one name and repeating it. Japa is a great and efficacious spiritual Sadhana. Sri Krishna says among Yagyas, Japa Yagya is best. For Japa Yagya an initiation

is not a requirement. One can consider Bhagavan as one's Guru; choose an Ishta Devata and then chant. The mantra chanted must be one for an Ishta Devata. Ishta Devata is one towards whom you are naturally inclined. For an Ishta Devata, one can consider, the family deity or the village deity as well. Choose a Nama and with God's grace start chanting it. Chanting 108 times is considered ideal. More than that is allowed as well.

Formal Japa must be performed sitting down and in a quiet place. Mantra Japa is essential for nourishing spiritual body even as food nourishes the physical body and love, the emotional body. Once I choose the Nama and the place of worship, I should then sit in a proper posture and invoke the Ishta Devata deity. A photo or a figurine is helpful to mentally invoke an image of the deity. Then, one offers namsakara. If one knows a dhyana shloka praising the deity, this also helps with visualization. If a person has been initiated in several Devatas give importance to your Ishta Devata mantra. Do not discard the other initiated mantras. The other mantras need not be chanted 108 times. In general, the more you repeat a mantra, the greater its Shakti.

Before and after chanting a mantra such as "Om Namah Shivaya" for over 100,000 times over a period of say two months one should perform Purascharana. This mantra chanting is like depositing money in a bank, it is depositing spiritual power. You can draw on it whenever you need it. It may be helpful in a crisis. You can call upon the mantra and say, "With power of this mantra let this crisis pass". Such a Japa helps in the material world as well. Thus, mantra Japa is useful for spiritual as well as material well-being. Every Japa has a meaning. It is useful to know its meaning. Most of them mean surrender to God. Thus, Namah Shivaya means I surrender to lord Shiva. It also means, I accept whatever happens, wherever it happens (family, workplace etc.) as will of God. This is known as Sharanagathi. I think of the meaning of the Japa and

then start chanting. Initially it can be loud to set the pace and pitch and later one can convert it to Manasa Japa.

During Japa there is no need to think of the deity. The mind can only do one thing at a time, deliberately. So, one has to decide if one wishes to concentrate on deity, mantra or mantra meaning. Concentration on mantra and its meaning are two different things. We have to choose one of them. In Japa, importance is given to sound of the Japa. It is not Artha Pradhana rather it is Shabda Pradhana. That is the reason a mantra cannot be translated into another language. The letters (or word) are most important. The silence between letters of mantra is important. In mantra japa one should concentrate on sound of the shabda alone. The silence between words of mantra is also important. Mantra meditation is different from silence. In Japa, concentration is on sound of the shabda. Silence is an important Vedantic meditation. There is a meditation called Silent meditation. It falls under Nidhidhyasanam and can be performed after Vedantic study especially of Manduka Upanishad. In this meditation, one starts with the Nama and then focuses on the silence. From silence then one goes to Chaitanyam. In Mantra Japa there is no silence. One only focuses on the words or letters of the Japa. After performing the Japa one should perform namaskara. A Japa mala can also be used. Mantra Japa is very important in many religions including Christianity and Islam.

Shloka # 6:

“Uttering the sacred words, either in a loud or low tone is preferable to chants in praise of the Supreme. Mental contemplation is superior to both.”

As per Ramana Maharishi, Japa Mantra can be performed in three modes. They are:

1. Uchha Japa: Loud chanting, all can hear.
2. Manda Japa: Whispering chant, only I can hear.
3. Manasa Japa: Purely mental, even I can't hear.

Manasa Japa is considered most efficacious. They say it is ten times more effective than Manda Japa. Manda Japa is ten times more effective than Uchha Japa.

Manasa Japa is a form of meditation as well hence it is also known as Japayagnam. So, if anyone wants to practice meditation the best method is to chant the Nama mentally. This is the best method to get started on meditation. Other forms of meditation require understanding of scriptures. With this Vachika Karmani portion of shloka # 4 is over.

Shlokas 7 and 8 respectively deal with Manasa Karmani. They contribute to one's spiritual growth. Ramana Maharishi calls it Chintanam. Any thought associated with Ishwara is Manasa karma. Even a flame can be thought of so long as it is associated with Ishwara as remover of darkness. One can meditate on nature such as on a river, a flower etc. Here God is considered the intelligence behind nature. Nature itself is Vishwa Roopam. Ishwara Chintanam can also include your children, considered a gift from god. Anything connected with God; thinking about it is Manasa Chintanam. Any activity associated with Saguna Ishwara is Manasa Chintanam. It is also called Upasana or mental spiritual activity. Puja is not Upasana as it a physical activity. Only mental activity qualifies as Upasana.

Shloka #7:

“ Constant, natural meditation like steady flow of ghee or a stream of water is better than intermittent contemplation.”

In this shloka following word meanings are important to note.

Sarala Chintanam: Flow of thought of God.

Viraltaha: Not obstructed by other worldly thoughts. The flow of divine thoughts is not obstructed by worldly thoughts.

Two examples of such meditation are provided in this shloka.

First is the analogy to flow of ghee. When it is poured, because of its thickness, it flows in one continuous flow

(Dhara Pravaha).

Second is analogy of flow of a perennial river or stream.

In the first one, flow is artificially maintained by tilting (Ajya Dhara) and later it becomes a natural flow.

Swamiji says Ishwara Upasana is of two types.

1. Ishwara is different from me (Dvaita Upasanam). This is acceptable in beginning stages, however ultimately we need to know that there is no difference between Jivatma and Paramatma.
2. I imagine God as myself; it is a higher form of meditation. Even in SandhyaVandanam this is prescribed. It is Advaitam and is called Abheda Upanam.

After Vedanta studies I will know I am God, however, at this time, I imagine I am God.

Nyasa means I visualize the deity as myself. This is Abheda Upanam. This is superior to Bheda Upanam. It prepares you for "Aham Brahma Asmi".

Swamiji says, one's Dasa Bhava (dualistic) should go . I should know "I am Jagat Karanam" or the Swamy.

Shloka # 8:

"The meditation "I am that" is regarded as more purifying than one based upon dualistic thought."

This is describing Abheda Upanam.

Here there is Abheda bhavana. Thinking Soham means I am Sakshat Ishwara. It is superior to Bheda or Dvaita Upanam. We must start from Dvaita and then move to Advaita.

(My note: Purascharana means preparatory rites, which is associated with mantra japas. Puras means first of all and ācaraṇa means undertaking, practicing and performing. Therefore puraścaraṇa means first preparatory rites. There are

two types of puraścaraṇa rites. One is to make saṅkalpa to certain prescribed number of recitations followed by homa, tarpaṇa, mārjana and bhojana on a regular basis. The second one is to do mantra japa and complete certain rounds as prescribed mantra śāstra-s. Puraścaraṇa should be done only after obtaining specific permission from the Guru, who initiated the mantra. Guru should be worshiped before and after puraścaraṇa. It is important that Guru should be offered dakṣiṇa. If Guru is not available, dakṣiṇa should be offered to his wife or son.)

With best wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy