

Gitaamrut

A Practical Manual for
Daily Life!



Dr. Shirin Venkat



Dedicated to the lotus feet of
Jagatguru Shri Krishna

Inner Search Foundation

1501 Chandak Unicorn

Dattaji Salvi Marg, Andheri West, Mumbai 400053

2nd Edition 2026. Only for free download on Inner Search Website

Copyright © Shirin Venkatramani 2026

All Rights Reserved.

This book has been published with all reasonable efforts taken to make the material error-free after the consent of the author. No part of this book shall be used, reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission from the author, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

The Author of this book is solely responsible and liable for its content including but not limited to the views, representations, descriptions, statements, information, opinions and references ["Content"]. The Content of this book shall not constitute or be construed or deemed to reflect the opinion or expression of the Publisher or Editor. Neither the Publisher nor Editor endorse or approve the Content of this book or guarantee the reliability, accuracy or completeness of the Content published herein and do not make any representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, including but not limited to the implied warranties of merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose.

The Publisher and Editor shall not be liable whatsoever for any errors, omissions, whether such errors or omissions result from negligence, accident, or any other cause or claims for loss or damages of any kind, including without limitation, indirect or consequential loss or damage arising out of use, inability to use, or about the reliability, accuracy or sufficiency of the information contained in this book.

Contents

Introduction.....	8
Acknowledgements.....	12
Discourse 1: Arjuna Vishaad Yoga - The Yoga of Dejection of Arjuna.	13
Discourse 2: Sankhya Yoga - The Yoga of Knowledge	24
Discourse 3 - Karma Yoga - The Yoga of Action	83
Discourse 4 - Jnyaan Karmasanyasa yoga - Knowledge of renouncing fruit of action	108
Discourse 5 - Karmasanyasa yoga - The Yoga of Action and Knowledge.	132
Discourse 6 - Atmasanyam yoga - The Yoga of self-control.....	147
Discourse 7 - Jnana Vijnyana Yoga - The Yoga of Jnana and Vijyana.	174
Discourse 8 - Akshara Brahma yoga - The Yoga of the Indestructible Brahma -Abhyas Yoga by Sankara	200
Discourse 9 - Rajvidya Rajguhya yoga - The Yoga of Sovereign Science and Sovereign Secret.	215
Discourse 10 - Vibhuti Yoga - The Yoga of Divine glories.....	238
Discourse 11 - Vishvaroop Darshan Yoga - The Yoga of the Vision of the Universal Form	251
Discourse 12 - Bhakti Yoga - The Yoga of Devotion.....	270
Discourse 13 - Kshetra Kshetrajnya Vibhag Yoga - The Yoga of discrimination between the Field and the knower of the field.....	289
Discourse 14 - Gunatrayavibhaga Yoga - The Yoga of Division of Three Gunas.	333

Discourse 15 - Purushottam Yoga - The yoga of the Supreme Person.	350
Discourse 16 - Daivaasur sampadi vibhaga yoga - The Yoga of division between the Divine and the demoniacal properties.....	370
Discourse 17 - Shraddhatraya vibhag yoga, the yoga of the Division of the Threefold Faith.	380
Discourse 18 - Mokshasanyasa yoga - The Yoga of liberation through the path of Knowledge and Self- surrender.	390
Vichar Vimarsh - [Discussions of some topics]	432
Glossary	458

Introduction

Mauni amavasya 11.2.21
Om Shri Ganeshaya namah.
Om Shri Gurubhyo namah
Om Shri Krishnaya namah

Gyan vairagya siddhyartham bheeksham dehi...

Felt inspired to make this day a muhurta for penning my nectar - like experience of the Bhagvad Gita, as had started two of my other books on the same day. The name Gitaamrut is verily an expression of my experience of the magical book that the Bhagvad Gita is.

I pay humble homage to my beloved mother, Dr. Damayantie Doongaji, M.A. [Sanskrit] Phd. L.L.B who instilled the love of the Bhagvad Gita in me. My first copy of the Bhagvad Gita she lovingly gave me at the age of 15 years calling me “Serene’. Since when I can remember, even at age ten, I have heard her expound the Bhagvad Gita and the Upanishads to the Army personnel in Jabalpur at the time of the war with China. She was passionate about this particular text and had given innumerable lectures on it. It is hardly surprising that I feel obsessed with the beauty therein expressed.

We started a small study group for studying the Bhagvad Gita since over a year. I had completed notes on selected shlokas from my beloved Guru’s book, [The Perennial Psychology of the Bhagvad Gita] and referring to Eknath Easwaran’s book [Bhagvad Gita for Daily living], and had also penned my own understanding of the same shlokas, which, I had started in 2016. This gave us a base, to discuss and put into practise our understanding of these 279 shlokas. Written homework was given once a week and the shlokas to be memorised twice a week. We had completed one reading last year on Divali Day and had a small celebration on the 18.11.20. [We have just completed

our third reading 16.1.26.] When I read shloka 68/69 chapter 18, where Shri Krishna says he loves the one who preaches the gospel, more than anyone on this entire globe, I merrily declared I would read the Bhagvad Gita a108 times! This I know is inspired by Him alone. Have been reading it daily since 3.12.20. Today, I feel overwhelmed at the transformation it has brought about in my own spiritual practice.

It seems appropriate that I share our learning with anyone who might care to read these pages! Surrendering the fruit thereof at His lotus feet, nay even the action at His lotus feet, nay even the thought that arises at His lotus feet- praying to be only the Nimitta matra!

The Song Divine creates within a melody, played on the divine flute of the Lord, that draws one toward some long forgotten distant home, which seems yet so near. In this narrative I want to weave a tapestry, the story forms the background, the glorious pattern reflects the Truth - The divine song of Lord Shri Krishna. It follows the sequential exposition as per the chapters and at the same time brings similar shlokas together as it unfolds.

It is often said that the war, alluded to in the Bhagvad Gita, is verily one in the minds of all unenlightened beings. Even though, this is true and the fact that the knowledge, can be transcribed on to our lives, yet the context of the Bhagvad Gita, is undoubtedly a historical one. When Arjuna fell into a state of despondency and grief at the sight of his Guru, Dronacharya and loved ones, arrayed opposite him ready for battle and beseeched Shri Krishna to guide him, Shri Krishna could have easily dispelled his despondency and cheered him to fight. He does not do this, for in His love for Arjuna He wants that Arjuna be an enlightened Being before the war begins. It is said when the disciple is ready the Guru appears. 'Ask and you shall receive' says the Bible, thus Shri Krishna in answer to Arjuna's plea rapidly raises the consciousness of Arjuna to that, of awareness of the Truth.

For spiritual enlightenment a period of despondency seems a prerequisite. After all, why would a worldly minded man ever aspire for Truth unless some real tragedy struck the very core of his being and shook him out of the slumber of mundane existence. The zeal to pursue a path to perennial joy becomes a necessity.

To begin the reading of this most sacred text the attitude within is of vital importance. To this mind a little imagination brought into play raises one's sensitivity greatly. One has just to imagine that the Lord Himself is lending His ear to our very personal difficulty and bringing us out of it with His divine instructions and suddenly each word assumes a significance heretofore unknown. Placing one's head at His lotus feet one begs the Lord to pull him out of the mire of this joyless transient life [shloka 33 ch 9].

The Bhagvad Gita is an Upanishad that is set on the battlefield! It expounds the Mahavakya Tat Tvam Asi. The first six chapters give you the knowledge of who you truly are - Tvam. The next six chapters discuss the Tat - That principle- Brahman and the final six are a combination of the two and summary of the teachings. As we proceed in studying this text we discuss selected shlokas while summarising others. Some anecdotes are also given to bring home a vital tenet.

Our small study group has been consistent and zealous in their response to the teachings, to the demanding homework given every week. In fact it is their sincerity and dedication which made the classes addictive. Notes from Shankara's commentary and the lectures I have heard from Swami Sarvapriyanand, Swami Tadatmanand, Swami Nikhilanand are added. It seems like a repetition – but by Jove! Unless we hammer this knowledge into our psyche, practice may be impossible. In the text questions and exercises are given and the reader is encouraged to mull over them. The reader may access a book

published on this very website titled “Essays on Ancient Wisdom,” to find answers; this text was written basically as an annexe to the study of the Bhagvad Gita, at the end of each chapter the relevant essay is indicated. Finally, an appendix - Vichar Vimarsha, is added, giving some ideal answers as well as application of the wisdom in daily life.

To give a name to these pages, the other alternative was Applied Bhagvad Gita, but then the application of the tenets, was so liberating that I could only name it Amrut. We invoke the blessings of our Guru Swami Rama of the Himalayas, and directly the Lord Shri Krishna to bestow that knowledge on us, that shall lead us:

*From the unreal to the Real
From darkness (of ignorance) to Light
From death to Immortality.*

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I feel delighted to acknowledge the help, encouragement and the support I have received, from Mr. Pawan Kapoor, the founder of ISF, whom I consider my younger brother.

The dedicated group of students who have regularly attended the study sessions Rama, Sudha, Shashi, Sarita, Rashmi, Manjushree, Ujwala, Kalavathy, Vijay, Shriram and many others who make time to the best of their ability. But for their contributions not only in the discussions but in answering questions via email, these sessions would lose their ZING! I would particularly like to mention Rama's effort in helping compile the Vichar Vimarsh section at the end.

Last but not the least my dear husband Dr. V. Venkat who regularly attended the sessions during the first 2 readings and gave his valuable input.

Discourse 1: Arjuna Vishaad Yoga - The Yoga of Dejection of Arjuna.

This most sacred Upanishad is set in the middle of a battlefield. At first sight it seems totally incongruous, to have such a lengthy discourse including the Vishvaroop Darshan, when the two armies are arrayed in front of each other and the battle cry is heard loud and clear. On reflection one realises that it may not have taken time as here Nara and Narayan were the disciple and Guru respectively. They are believed to be beyond this dimension of time and space.

The dating of the Mahabharat is put variously at 3100-5561 years before the Christian Era. The exact Tithi [day according to the Hindu calendar] is also controversial. However, the Tithi of the Bhagvad Gita Jayanti is not debated it is fixed on the Shukla [waxing moon] Mokshada Ekadashi [11th day] of the Margasheersha [Nov-Dec] month. In 2020 it fell on Christmas day!

The war for the throne is between cousins, and at the time the then King was considered the Lord of the entire earth i.e. the realm of the mortals. It was no mean battle it was like a world war. The Mahabharat war happened 7,581 years ago according to the scholar of Astronomy and Ancient Shastras Dr. Nilesh Neelkanth Oak. Mahabharat the epic composed by Maharishi Vyas is the largest epic ever written in the whole world till date. It comprises of 100,000 shlokas of which the Bhagvad Gita has 700 shlokas and 18 chapters. The epic is so vast and profound and exhaustive, that it is said that what is not to be found in it is not to be found anywhere. It is also said a family should not keep a copy of it in the home as it may cause a fight between brothers! So powerful are the vibrations it creates. Be that as it may, every home must keep not just one copy of the Bhagvad Gita, but to my mind several copies of it so that wherever one turns one is reminded of the message of the Bhagvad Gita.

So, chapter one- the scene opens with the two armies arrayed facing each other and the old blind king Dhritarashtra asking Sanjay, who has been granted tele-vision and tele-audience, to describe the events of the war as they occur. Sanjay means one who has conquered his senses and intellect. Dhritarashtra is born blind – he exemplifies the EGO which is a pseudo entity usurping the place of the Self and claiming the territory to be his! The word Dhritarashtra means the one who sustains the country. He is blind to the faults of his sons and clings to them for security. This is the truth about our egos too! He has innumerable progeny – Dhritarashtra is said to have 100 sons and 1 daughter! The names of

almost every child begin with Du - which is a syllable that signifies ill or difficult. [Duryodhana means a warrior difficult to conquer] Strange? Not really. The innumerable progeny of the Ego are greed, lust, anger, arrogance, jealousy and delusion in its myriad forms, difficult indeed to overcome. The major gates to hell. The war is all about this. The battle is within each of us and sometimes it is all day! We justify our mistakes and condemn others loudly in our minds. Judgement itself is a function of the Ego for it creates a separate identity.

So, Dhritarashtra questions Sanjay about what his children are doing as they face the opposing army and what the sons of Pandu (his late brother) are doing? Now the drama begins. In the first few shlokas Duryodhana the King of Hastinapur presents the heroes of the opposing army and his own army to his venerable teacher Drona. His tone is mostly taunting as the heroes in the opposing army are all the students of Drona. He names the heroes particularly Drushtadyumna who is born to kill Drona. The story goes that Drupada the King and Drona were students together. Drona was a brahmin and although extremely talented in archery had no income. He approached Drupada, who rebuffed him, saying friendship is amongst equals. Drona was so offended he went to the then caretaker King of Hastinapur- Dhritarashtra, where he became the teacher of the young Pandavas, who became so proficient that when their time came to give the Guru Dakshina, he asked them to vanquish Drupada which they did! Accordingly, he won the kingdom of Drupada but returned it, as he was a Brahmin and had no such ambitions. To take revenge Drupada performed a sacrifice to be blessed with a son who would kill Drona. So, here is Dhrushtadyumna awaiting his chance but as he had humbly approached Drona for training, he too was trained by him, in the art of Archery and warfare.

In the first shloka, blind king Dhritarashtra is asking Sanjay to describe the events. Sanjay begins at the beginning – telling the King, that his son Duryodhana is describing the Pandavas army to Dronacharya, the teacher of both the Pandavas and Kauravas. Duryodhana is scoffing, particularly as he points out Drushtadyumna, as if to say, ‘he is born to kill you and you have trained him for the same.’ Later he talks about his own army.

Now read on as the scene unfolds. Some of the oft quoted shlokas and those found particularly helpful are discussed in detail below.

Shloka 10

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ।

पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम् ॥ 10 ॥

This army of ours, fully protected by Bhishma, is unconquerable; while that army of theirs guarded by Bhima is, easy to conquer.

This particular shloka is given because the translation by Swami Rama is exactly the opposite and apparently Sanskrit being the classic language it is, the shloka can have both meanings. The translation by Swami Rama says: “This force of ours supervised by Bhishma, is large but inadequate however, the force of these (Pandavas) supervised by Bhima is small but adequate.” Swami Rama then goes on to explain that even though Duryodhana’s army is large and almost invincible he knows in his heart of hearts, that he is fighting an unjust war and thus is sabotaging his own might. This often happens to an egoistic man who shows he is courageous but is very insecure. Both translations are correct as paryaptam means enough so it may signify limited or adequate. So, Duryodhana might be saying as the translation goes, that their army is unlimited but that of the Pandavas led by Bhima is limited.

It is a taking stalk of the powers of ego, that is going on and as one embarks on an enterprise of self-interest, one usually takes cognisance of one’s strengths and how one can manipulate victory, by garnering the support of like-minded friends. Although this may not have happened in the life of people like us, it does happen in those around us, and we may have been victims of such games. An incidence comes to mind when being a Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist I had been responsible for nearly 6000, deliveries per year over a period of 11 years. A few cases which were my prize cases were so illogically presented to the administration [no doctors] as to seem greatly mismanaged. Needless to say, I was amused, the Head of Department questioned me, and was surprised that instead of being in despair, I was smiling. To me I had done my best the outcome that an enquiry be made, was not in my hands [even though the patients did well]. In the meanwhile, the perpetrator had conspired and garnered the support of a Muslim fanatic consultant. Even he could only tell the administration that though Shirin is right, we must uphold the lady who

has complained because she is a Muslim and that is our principle! Well, fortunately the administration just filed it.

Shloka 15

पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनञ्जयः ।
पौण्ड्रं दध्मौ महाशङ्खं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥ 15 ॥

Shri Krishna blew His conch named Panchajanya; Arjuna, Devadatta, while Bhima of ferocious deeds blew his mighty conch Paundra.

Hrishikesh is one whose hair stands on end from sheer Joy! Hrushika - is also senses and isha the Lord. Panchanjanya is the conch which is the body with 5 senses, the Lord blows life and speaks through it. Devadatta conch was received by Arjuna as a gift from Varuna. Arjuna means the one who makes utmost sincere effort (success is bound to touch his feet).

Bhima described as vrukodara, because although of broad chest and mighty shoulders he has the waist/lower abdomen like the wolf- narrow. Bhimkarma itself means ferocious deeds.

The thunderous sound of the conches of the Pandavas was harmonious and sent a wave of fear through the Kaurav army. The side of justice should be loud and clear. An amusing incident illustrates this, when I was teaching my residents. I asked a question to one of them and he was answering something softly, I said 'loud and clear Ganesh', to which he only quietly replied 'its not clear na Ma'am, therefore not loud Ma'am.'

Shloka 21 /22

अर्जुन उवाच ।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ॥ 21 ॥
यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान् ।
कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन् रणसमुद्यमे ॥ 22 ॥

Then, O king Dhritarashtra, Arjuna addressed these words to Krishna (Hrishikesh): 'O steadfast one, place my chariot between both armies.' And

*keep it there till I have carefully observed these warriors drawn up for battle
and have seen with whom I have to engage in this fight.*

As the two armies blew their conches that rent the air, Mother Earth trembles. Arjuna wishes to inspect the army and the Kings who had dared to join Duryodhana against him. Shri Krishna, who is the charioteer of Arjuna, therefore, drives the glorious chariot driven by white horses, having Shri Hanumanji on their banner, to the frontline and places it strategically before Bhishma and Drona, particularly, those very dear to Arjuna. The white horses exemplify the senses that have been well controlled. The reins are held by the charioteer, the purified enlightened intellect, Shri Krishna, and the master of the chariot [Arjuna] is the Jivatma [deluded by Maya].

Swami Rama explains that we, like Arjuna, should also be aware of our strengths and weaknesses before we begin sadhana, so as to estimate our capacity, and undertake only such sadhana that we can complete. The teacher must be consistent and steady, he is therefore addressed as Achyut which means steadfast, so that the student may be able to follow him clearly. The student here is referred to as Gudakesh – the one who has conquered sleep. So, we need to be alert and drop all laziness, when we are on the path of Self Realisation.

In daily life my reading from this verse is take a pause, when in doubt of right or wrong and become aware, then whatever action is taken, it will be the correct one. Often, we act impulsively which is not the same as intuitively and so we need to reflect even if the situation is over so that it may not happen again.

Shloka 28 /29

दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ॥ 28 ॥

सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति

वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ॥ 29 ॥

Arjuna said: Krishna, as I see these kinsmen arrayed for battle, my limbs give way, and my mouth is getting parched; nay a shiver runs through my body and hair stands on end.

When one experiences sorrow and grief born from attachment, one is confused and cannot discriminate right from wrong. Even men who have been looked upon as wise and revered can sink into sorrow- they lose touch with reality and their nervous system seems shattered. They experience shaking, trembling, dryness of mouth and weakness of the limbs. A black bee has tremendous strength it can bore a hole through wood, but when it is intoxicated with the fragrance of the lotus it is unable to escape its soft petals as they close in, on it, at sunset. When one is intoxicated with alcohol or sensual pleasure, or even attachment to dear ones, one loses self-control.

Symptoms of adrenal overactivity may be found in the body if some shocking news is heard. The symptoms described happen due to hormonal secretions and neuronal stimulation. Because of these reactions, toxins start building up in the body and further deterioration happens. Arjuna had lost his equilibrium and the capacity to think rationally; all inner strength seems to have been lost. Many mental and even physical disorders are a result of attachment to the objects of this world. Both the body and mind are intimately connected and a disturbance in the one is felt in the other. Medications for the mind can only result in symptomatic relief.

Unless we treat the cause and learn about the intimate body mind connection no cure is possible. The inseparable link between the two realities of body and mind is pranic energy, called the breath of life. When we suffer the death of a close relative, a near and dear one the mind can be plunged into the depths of despair.

Answering the question what helped you to get out of a situation of despair, one of the participants an Anaesthetist by profession shared the following and expressed thus:

“In 1976 my daughter who was three and half years old had a very bad head injury due to a fall from a static adult cycle. She was admitted under AIIMS neurosurgery department but was nursed in a general ICU as at that time it was a common ICU. Since I was a resident doctor, I was able to enter and see her. I observed that she was tightening one side of her body intermittently. When I shared this information with those very senior celebrated surgeons, they just

put it down to an overanxious mother. Ultimately, she was coning when they took her for decompressing surgery for severe cerebral oedema.

When my daughter was rushed into the operating theatre, I was standing atop AIIMS building watching cars go by, on the large crossroads and had two thoughts one I was standing on crossroads, whether my daughter will live or not. Also, I realized how little I needed to be happy. Just welfare of family and other bare necessities. I had no blame for the surgeons (who apologised for neglecting to act early, as I had warned) only prayers acceptance and equanimity.

They had just stitched the skin of the skull and below that was swollen brain and a loose bone. The surgeons told me only you both can save your child as the next main killer will be infection. They had done what they could. Her fate was up in the air.

My husband and I, helped with one classmate and his wife, put on masks and looked after her, with utmost care and faith in prayers. There was a strange calm as my duty was cut out. We just worked round the clock. No negative thinking, simply work or rest, and instructions to each other after shifts. All the staff, liftmen, friends were visiting temples, churches and gurudwaras. We were doing our best. Anu opened her eyes moved all four limbs and was afebrile we knew God, was with us, in our hands, and minds. I do not know but seeing the karma required, and no negative thought, total faith, was what helped us to overcome that deep shock. When God gives us problems he arms us with courage.”

The other participants shared that TIME was a great healer. To that this mind answered one needs to transcend the Time effect, and therefore, Shri Krishna trains us. To the Self realised being, this mundane existence is like a dream or nightmare, out of which he has long since woken up, so the happenings which seem so poignant make no impression on him.

Shloka 35

एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन ।
अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ॥ 35 ॥

O Slayer of Madhu, I do not want to kill them, though they may slay me, even for the sovereignty of the three worlds: how much the less for the kingdom here on earth!

It is known that before the war Dhritarashtra told Sanjay to advise the Pandavas to take to the begging bowl instead of fighting a war that would end in killing so many. That they would be better off as mendicants. This long sermon was heard by Yudhishtir and let go. Such is the power of suggestion though, that Arjuna started to say the same thing to Shri Krishna, when Arjuna saw arrayed against him his beloved grand Sire and Guru. Today the method of education is suggestion, and this distracts an individual- he is unable to see right from wrong. The best method is direct experience, to study with a teacher who has direct experience and follow his guidance, is indeed fortunate.

Arjuna puts forth many arguments and even quotes scriptures to justify his attitude of despondency. This is all stemming from a state of deep attachment which prevents any balanced decision. The physical and psychological symptoms suffered by Arjuna clearly arise from attachment and delusion. This is false knowledge. Just wisdom of speech is not true wisdom. The body and mind should be in equilibrium for true wisdom to dawn, not in a state of discord. Listening to the “words of wisdom” from Arjuna, Sri Krishna knows that this “wisdom” is mere escapism due to attachment, obviously NOT cowardice.

There are four categories of people- the 1st, ‘Time’ oriented who think only of the immediate gains and self-gratification like Duryodhana and the modern man. 2nd, ‘Goal’ oriented who are slightly better and have a goal in view albeit a material one, but they weigh the consequences of action. 3rd, ‘Life’ oriented who like to work for others, and live in harmony, the best are the 4th, ‘Purpose’ oriented - the sole purpose of their life is to gain Self-realisation.

Shloka 40

**कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।
धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥ 40 ॥**

Age long family traditions disappear with the destruction of a family; and virtue having been lost, vice takes hold of the entire race.

It is sad indeed to see such a brave warrior in this state, the one who is an example of one pointed attention suddenly drained of all power. The physical signs and symptoms described above, arise from an imbalanced mind, deluded by emotion not from a stable dispassionate mind or heart. Therefore, Shri Krishna quietly smiles as shown in the next chapter for He knows all this does not arise from Vairagya [non-attachment] but from its opposite attachment. Feeling sorry for his own relatives and teachers and grandfather and friends is because he still identifies, as a body and therefore gives so much importance to its relations.

There are situations in our life when truly all energy seems to simply leave us and we do not know what to do. The eyes are weeping, the heart is sinking, emotionally we are totally drained with no fight left in us, not unlike Arjuna we must then look within to the Guru who dwells in our heart and read the Bhagvad Gita!

Eknath Easwaran says ‘one of the best definitions of confusion is doing what is unnecessary and failing to do what is necessary.’ Situations where, what is right action is not clear do come in our life, one can surely recall many instances where the question should I do or should I not do arise. Let us take a sankalpa today that should such a situation arise, we will follow the guidelines given by Shri Krishna and not be confused.

The first chapter ends with Arjuna letting the Gandiva bow slip from his shoulders, sinking into the hinder part of the chariot. He is willing to be killed unarmed rather than fight his revered grandfather and Guru. The chapter is aptly titled, ‘The yoga of dejection of Arjuna.’

Shri means Lord, Krishna is one who draws (pulls toward himself, attracts) to himself. The Self [Lord] in each one of us is Krishna and once He is drawing us to him it will be impossible to resist. Be prepared for total annihilation. To have Shri Krishna as Saarthi [charioteer] a much better word than charioteer, it means so much more... is such great good fortune and we can only feel blessed, that Arjuna, deserved it and we are all benefitting even today. Even the deepest despair would vanish when the words of Shri Krishna are contemplated on and experienced.

Considering the border tension with China, it's role in the pandemic, the economic chaos and the world-wide strife, yesterday a deep sadness was felt.

The Manual of Life the Bhagvad Gita came alive and spoke to me thus:

-Never give in to despondency- only the deluded do so. Ch.1

-Fight a righteous war, to the best of your ability, wherever it is (primarily in the mind), without being attached to the outcome (which is not in your hands). ----

-Never be attached to inaction. You are the Self. Ch.2

-The secret of Karma is to surrender the pseudo doer at the feet of the Self and then take right action- then action becomes no action, for Karma does not accrue to the Self. Ch.3.

-Sri Krishna - The Supreme Divinity pervades all and is the only reality there is.

-The wise one who knows this verily merges with it. Ch.7 and 9

-Thus, without hating the wrong doer, appropriate action should be undertaken. There is no place for sorrow when clearly seen that all is Him alone and we are all a part of divinity.

Reflection and Exercises:

- 1. Write a short account of a situation in your life when you felt despondent or sorrowful or confused and what guided you out of it?*
- 2. What is the meaning of the word Duryodhana? Why du?*
- 3. Write what Paryaptam and Aparyaptam mean to you?*
- 4. When does Durbuddhi affect one?*

Discourse 2: Sankhya Yoga - The Yoga of Knowledge

The second chapter begins with Shri Krishna chiding Arjuna for this faintheartedness at a most inopportune moment and exhorts him to get up and fight. To this the lamenting Arjuna replies how? When he is smitten with grief and miserable at the thought of killing these venerable beings who have verily brought him up. Arjuna then beseeches Shri Krishna to guide him placing his head at the feet of the Lord and Guru, he asks to be instructed as a disciple. Unless the disciple desires to be instructed the Guru does not impart knowledge. One has to be receptive, ready and respectful to receive guidance. Daivam or fate is the final factor- that too, is the subtle environment created by one's attitude in previous lifetimes or earlier challenges. What could be greater fortune than to have the Lord Himself as your charioteer and Guru. The word Guru stands for – Gu- darkness, and Ru- removes, the One who removes the darkness of ignorance.

Arjuna has sited the scriptures in his tirade against the war, and now Shri Krishna responds.

The Bhagvad Gita begins now. Shri Krishna primarily expounds three themes in this chapter:

1. One's true nature [shlokas 11- 38] The answer to the cardinal question -who am I? Knowledge of the Self is covered by ignorance, and it is that, which leads to misery and suffering. The Self is not an object to be known; It is Pure Awareness, the body-mind complex is an instrument, used by the Self to experience this manifest Universe. The instrument is made of the 24 tatvas [which we shall learn about] arising from Prakruti, and is in a constant state of flux, changing every moment, subject to old age, disease and death. The Self does not change, it is eternal, immutable and infinite beyond time and space.

2. Karmayog- Buddhi yoga [shlokas 39 - 53]. Shri Krishna understands that for an ordinary intellect even to grasp the concept of the Self is difficult let alone realise It, therefore He shows yet another way, and that is to surrender the fruit of any action, at the feet of the Lord and yolk the mind, to performing the action skilfully without attachment to the outcome. This leads to instant peace of heart, as no anxiety ensues, the Lord is responsible not the little 'me' which is an instrument. To emphasise once again to his loving, sinless [anagha] disciple Arjuna who is very dear to Him, Shri Krishna begins this dialogue; at

the root of this is Arjuna's ultimate well-being. Arjuna should incur no Karma and attain the highest goal with the war being only a medium to the Ultimate, is the very basis for this intense crash course to Self-realisation that Shri Krishna is putting Arjuna through.

3.The characteristics of the Self realised Being and practices to get there: [shlokas 54-72.]. Here Arjuna is curious to know what a Self-realised Being behaves like, he probably wonders whether this Being loses touch with Reality as we know it! Shri Krishna not only elaborately explains but also gives us the practices that would take us there!

Selected shlokas are discussed in detail.

Shloka 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।

अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥ 2 ॥

Shri Bhagwan said: Arjuna how has this infatuation overtaken you at this odd hour? It is shunned by noble souls; neither will it bring heaven, nor fame to you.

The true Guru does not mince words; He is here to wake you up. Shri Krishna therefore admonishes Arjuna for his ignoble (anarya) behaviour as this does not behove an Arya i.e. a noble one. The Arya is not fainthearted, and Arjuna is fighting a JUST war which is his duty. Swami Rama explains that there are three distinct ways of understanding and approaching life: first is the purely material, as the Kauravas who believed only in the physical power of their army, the second is Arjuna, who is sensitive and compassionate, but this level of understanding is crippling and paralysing him, at a most inopportune moment and hence Shri Krishna raises his understanding to the third, (ultimate) level of understanding of who he truly is and what is Truth.

Had Arjuna been on the opposite side his feelings were justified, and indeed he must desist from war, e.g. Bhishma and Drona are fighting only because of loyalty, which is a poor shield for protecting the wicked, says Eknath. What is

wrong is wrong, it does not change because your king is indulging in it. This is the very reason why they failed for they did not have the courage of their conviction. They knew they were supporting the one who was wrong. In the next verse Shri Krishna addresses Arjuna as Parantapa which means destroyer of the foe. The foe is only one and that is our ego which does not reside outside.

The Bhagvad Gita applies to each of us, and we need not be on the battlefield to heed the instructions of Sri Krishna. He is within us and chides us as he is doing Arjuna now. Sometimes we become weak with fear and faintheartedness, confused and puzzled ready to give up. We need someone to jolt us out of this state and what better than to read these words of Sri Krishna?

Shloka 6

न चैतद्विद्मः कतरन्नो गरीयो
यद्वा जयेम यदि वा नो जयेयुः ।
यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषाम
स्तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः ॥ ६ ॥

We do not even know which is preferable for us-to fight or not to fight; nor do we know whether we shall win or whether they will conquer us. Those very sons of Dhritarashtra, killing whom we do not even wish to live, stand in the enemy ranks.

Once again, we find Arjuna, lamenting for even though he hears Shri Krishna, he does not listen, and the wisdom by-passes his understanding, and he continues to wallow in self-pity. This then is the ego's ultimate ploy to divert one's attention from the discovery of Truth. Everything seems so futile. Not knowing whether if such action is undertaken, and the senses and mind controlled, the result would be an ultimate discovery of eternal joy. Thus, the mind rambles on and on, and cannot reach the state of one-pointedness (ekagrata-dharana) which is a must for Meditation (dhyana) to happen. For all Gurus say meditation cannot be done, it happens.

A deeply moved Arjuna is unable to recover his balance, because of his compassion and attachment. One cannot but have sympathy with him for the situation appeals to our ego as well- in fact thinking in the opposite way seems

cruel to us. Yet on deeper reflection one realises it is the escape route, of the ego, how subtle and surreptitious it is.

Shloka 7

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः

पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसम्मूढचेताः ।

यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे

शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥ 7 ॥

With my very being smitten with faint heartedness and my mind puzzled with regard to duty, I beseech You! Tell me which is decidedly good; I am your disciple. Pray, instruct me, who have taken refuge in You.

For the first time in the Bhagvad Gita Arjuna now beseeches Shri Krishna to guide him and falls at His feet saying “I am your disciple, pray instruct me.” When the disciple surrenders, it is only the first step Swami Rama says for then, he must be instructed and led into the mysteries of existence.

To receive Grace, one has to be receptive. In the Bible it is said ‘Ask and you shall receive’, one has to humbly beg the Lord to guide him out of this mire of fear, due to the strangle hold of attachment. It is said that the Guru appears when the disciple is ready, and to become ready most of the time one has to get a slap from destiny. Paul Brunton writes - Nature is like a mother at first, she cajoles you, then explains to you, and then if you do not listen, slaps you to look for Truth and happiness within. This is Arjuna’s state and he wisely pleads for guidance from the Lord Himself. The word Karpunya signifies intense misery [note the word misery has embedded in it – miser- krupana actually means a miser- why? He has the greatest treasure in His heart Atma, and yet he refuses to recognise it, he hoards it and wastes his life, due to lack of knowledge of the Truth [source of perennial joy].

Shloka 11

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रजावादांश्च भाषसे ।

गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥ 11 ॥

Shri Bhagwan said: you grieve over those who should not be grieved for and yet you speak like a learned wise one; wise men do not sorrow over the living or the dead.

In this verse Swami Rama explains, two words are important and informative- gatasu- which is derived from two roots- gata -gone, and su - breath literally meaning the dead, and agatasu which literally means whose breath has not gone- living. Both death and birth are but habits of the body they have nothing to do with annihilation. The wise do not grieve for the dead or the living! The teacher is making the disciple aware of two distinct realities, one is the relative which is easier to grasp that which has this habit of being born and dying. The other is the absolute reality, which we fail to recognise and that is the eternal truth, beyond time and space for it can witness both. We all have it and yet we overlook it, because it is the subject and not the object of inspection! Swami Rama says the second chapter from this verse till verse 38 explains the Samkhya philosophy, which is the most ancient, it means “that which explains the whole.”

It is a marvellous line where the Lord implies you speak wise words, but your action is just the opposite, as explained by Eknath. You want joy but are heading towards sorrow. The question we have to ask ourselves is do we want fulfilment, joy and peace? Then that is the direction to take- like Shri Ramakrishna would have said “if you want to go east you musn’t go west!” unlike Bismarck, the Iron chancellor of Germany who said, “I don’t want war, I only want victory.” This is what we do on an individual level too, ‘I don’t want to fight my parents, but I want my way.’ In the second line, Sri Krishna uses strong words, explaining the wise do not grieve over the death of the body for we are the eternal spirit. When Sri Ramana Maharshi was leaving his body many a disciple wept and told him not to leave - his reply was “Where can I go? I am everywhere. How can I leave you?”

A Pandit is one who is a Panda or the knower of Truth. There are two realities in which we dwell one is the relative and the other is the absolute. Because the relative has duality of subject / object we get mesmerised and do not cognise the absolute reality which is the unconditioned subject. It is easy if one can see the point but otherwise, the simplest way to follow, is to surrender this ego at

the feet of the Master and accept whatever comes good or bad or mixed. An understanding that all is passing is also very helpful in enabling us to enjoy peace.

Shloka 13

देहिनोऽस्मिन्यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।

तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥ 13 ॥

Just as boyhood, youth and old age are attributed to the soul through this body, even so it attains another body. The wise man does not get deluded by this.

Ekknath says, for those of us who object to the philosophy of past lives on the simplistic point ‘why can we not remember it?’ the answer is do you remember what happened on your first birthday? and if your answer is no- then the natural conclusion should be you did not exist! This of course is not tenable. Somerset Maugham who had the good fortune of meeting Sri Ramana Maharishi, has written the book *The Razor’s Edge* based on him, in which he says, even for a nonbeliever it is very difficult to reject the philosophical structure on which this theory is based.

This Shloka is the key to understanding the changing nature of the manifest world. Whatever is experienced is constantly changing, death does not occur on a particular day and time, it is constantly happening, we as doctors know this better than anyone else that cells die and are reborn every moment. It is fortunate we cannot feel it. Vipassana teaches us to try and feel the change happening in the body in the form of sensations because we live on sensations. We enjoy the pleasant, and detest the unpleasant, but if we were to maintain the witness mode and observe these sensations, we would no longer crave for them and we could develop discrimination. So, Shri Krishna is telling us do not get deluded by this passing show.

Swami Tadatmanand: Dehin means the possessor of the deha, and dehinaha- is the in-dweller so we have two entities already. Who is that Dehi? This body which goes through kumaram, yauvanam and jaraa? For whom are all these? This body is young or old but I am not. The body is like a vehicle, we acquire it, drive it around and then we get rid of it. Then there is a dehantarah Prapti =

i.e. after this deha we get another one. Who is the one who does that? I am --
----- fill in the blank- whatever you put into it is wrong e.g. old, young, man,
woman, Shirin, Govinda.

Deha is the sthool [physical that which is available to all senses] sharira, then there is the Dehi- the in-dweller – the one which travels from this body to the next, this is not physical- sukshma sharira [non-tangible- subtle]. Eyeballs- physical, sight is subtle, hands and legs- physical, power of grasping, walking- sukshma etc. lungs sthool- breathing sukshma, brain [1.5kg] - sthool, thinking [how much do emotions weigh] sukshma; take for e.g., weigh the CD with ability to hold 1000 GB, put it in a computer load it to capacity, remove reweigh it, will the weight change? Sukshma sharira is that which enlivens the sthool sharira - the difference between the dead body and the live body. That is the one, that travels from one body to the other. We are not using the word – soul, because each of us has a different meaning for this term, so avoid using this word.

The third entity is Atma. = this is independent of both the shariras e.g. computer- Hardware [sthool sharira], software is [sukshma sharira] and electricity [Atma- Pure Consciousness].
Dhiraha tatra na muhyati- the Dhiraha is not confused about this.

Shloka 14

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।

आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥ 14 ॥

O son of Kunti, the contacts between the senses and their objects, which give rise to the feelings of heat and cold, pleasure and pain etc. are transitory and fleeting; therefore, Arjuna endure them.

The function of the senses is to transmit the sensation whether it be pleasant or unpleasant, as soon as they come in contact with the stimulus, e.g., sound for hearing, light to the eyes and so on. The mind, which can be considered our most powerful sense, interprets these sensations and simultaneously creates craving or aversion. These sensations, however, are so fleeting that they cannot be held and kept. We have also been endowed with the capacity to discriminate – Vivek – and thus Shri Krishna tells us just endure the transitory

sensations for they are fleeting. The emphasis is on increasing our threshold for endurance in difficulty and reducing our clinging to pleasant sensations for neither will last.

This is one of the celebrated shlokas of the Bhagvad Gita, because it emphasises the fleeting nature of sensory perceptions, at the same time goads Arjuna to bear, to endure this passing phenomenon.

How do we withstand suffering? Suffering is caused by contact with the world and its reactions.

What gives meaning to life- Work and Love do, but all these disappear if there is too much suffering. However, if you bear the suffering with dignity and serenity that itself will give meaning to life.

The word Titiksha is defined by Sankara thus:

सहनं सर्वदुःखानामऽप्रतिकारपूर्वकम् ।

चिन्ताविलापरहितं सा तितिक्षा निगद्यते ॥

"Endurance of all afflictions without countering aids, and without anxiety or lament is said to be titiksha." (Vivekachudamani 25)

It is undoubtedly hard to bear pain of any kind be it physical or mental and then to bear it without anxiety or lament while not even trying to seek relief seems well-nigh impossible. Yet, bearing in mind that all is fleeting may help increase our threshold. The anxiety and lament can be eliminated for sure, and even if it seems a disaster or calamity the situation can be transformed into a blessing by the right attitude. For example, if one is afflicted with an illness, this results from our Prarabhdha karma [from past lifetimes], now if we give in to lamentation and anxiety, we will be sowing seeds of the same, and the result will be the fruit thereof i.e. more cause for lamenting and anxiety. If, however we endure it with fortitude and utilise every discomfort as a reminder that we are not the body or the mind and remember the Lord – what a blessing that might become!

Moreover, we would be sowing seeds of acceptance and patience and devotion and shall reap the fruit thereof. It is well known that what comes goes, therefore even if the body goes due to the illness, the fact remains that it will go, so why not use this opportunity to turn in the right direction? After all,

hasn't Shri Krishna assured us that the one who remembers him at the time of death verily comes to Him. It is therefore never too late. In fact, my take on Karma is whatever reminds one of the Truth- God- Self is good karma and whatever takes you away from It is bad karma. Thus, seemingly pleasant happenings in life which only leave one hankering for more are a result of the Rajo Guna which takes one away from the Truth, straight into the jaws of misery in a state of stupor – so one does not even notice what brought the misery on!

Shloka 16

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।

उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥ 16 ॥

The unreal has no existence, and the real never ceases to be; the reality of both has thus been perceived by the seers of Truth.

This is another classic Shloka. Just reflect on what Shri Krishna is saying. The definition of REALITY as given by all Sages and scriptures is that which is permanent. So, all that passes is not real only that is considered real which endures. The Rishis [seers] have realised this.

‘Sat’ has two meanings: the first is ‘truth’ and the second ‘that which is,’ how simple that is. That which IS, is Truth, so that which has an eternal existence, is Truth or only Truth has an eternal existence all that is unreal passes and thus it did not exist in the first place. “Truth is God and God is Truth.” Mahatma Gandhi.

According to Swami Sarvapriyanand the whole of Bhagvad Gita is hidden in this one shloka. He makes an elaborate commentary applying Vedantic principles which prove what is illusion and what is Truth. Maya means ‘ma’ - no, aya - ‘is’ - that which “is” and “is not” - i.e. an illusion but an illusion must subsist on something for e.g. the mirage of an oasis must have a desert and the sun to appear, the rope appearing as snake must have the rope as its substrate. That is the crux of this manifestation it appears as real, but it is an illusion imposed on the Truth - Consciousness!

One can even take the example of a dream which is real enough, while it lasts but as soon as one wakes up one dismisses it as false. It needed the substrate

of a mind to appear and the same substrate in a different state that of waking rejected it! Thus, it was born, it lived and it died- the same as this body does and yet this could not happen without a substratum of Consciousness – Pure Awareness which made it possible to be experienced. We need to identify ourselves with that to become free of fear that sometimes this nightmare of a life, creates. Pure Awareness is said to be beyond both- being and nonbeing, this is necessarily so for both, are an appearance in It. This can be borne out by the simple understanding that manifestation, is all that one can perceive and the unmanifest is what is not perceived, however, both must have a ground which is the Pure Awareness in and beyond both.

Shri Krishna has in this one shloka encapsulated the theory of Vedanta. Notes from Swami Sarvapriyanand's lecture:

Satchidanand – Drik [seer] drushya [scene] vivek [discrimination]

The unreal never comes into existence and the real never ceases to be. These two have been properly ascertained by the *knowers of Reality*.

Sri Krishna has expounded in this shloka: you as pure existence.

Shankara's commentary:

Concept 1- effect and cause- All effects are born in their causes and exist and then disappear e.g. table is the effect of wood; waves are the effect of water in an ocean -if all water removed -no waves. Effect, has no existence apart from the cause. The effect has no existence outside its cause, the cause exists without the effect - Cause is *Satyam* effect is *Mithya*.

Concept 2 - things have an intrinsic and/or incidental property (may or may not be there) e.g. boiling a potato- hot while being boiled, heat is incidental and does not belong to it, it was borrowed from the boiling water, it will be lost. Only fire is intrinsically hot.

If we consider 'Existence' as a subject of discussion- *being* is the intrinsic property it will never go, but that which borrows it – body – it will disappear.

Shankara bhasya:

Nothing has inherent existence: what are we looking at? What are we touching? E.g table made of wood, that is *asat*- false, it's an appearance not truth, for if it is broken it is gone only wood remains that which is, is in essence, is called **sat buddhi**. Buddhists give the examples of a fist exists when fingers

are folded, when open only fingers, and what are they made of? Nothing in the world is what it appears to be - Jagat mithya- Brahma satyam.

None of these effects are seen before or after their appearance- born and dies. Jatasya hi dhruvo mrutyu that which is born must die.

So, what has inherent existence? Does nothing have any inherent existence? Sarvatra Buddhi Chet sadbuddhi chet asadbuddhi achet. Everything has two aspects, the appearance (name and form- changes) and the Being of that something (which never changes). We take the appearance as real, and get involved with it as it is interesting and changes all the time. That which is existence is constant, does not change and is missed totally- you are *That Isness*. In every experience there are two- changing and unchanging- duality - sansar starts. Once I realise, I am the water, I no longer remain only a wave- all of the waves are me and I am all. One no longer dies. Shift the identification into the *Isness* how? Remove everything perceptible including thoughts, your identification shifts. The experience **of Isness** does not change- Pure existence cannot be cut by time, because it is never born.

Reality does not exist in the Universe. It is the other way around – Universe exists in the Reality. e.g. in a dream what is the stuff? Are you in it? When anything is destroyed the appearance is destroyed not existence.

Is reality real? Can we ever speak of existence without things? What a foolish question - there is only existence. Suppose all things of the Universe are destroyed- in Pralaya then will there be any existence left at all? **Existence Is, only the perceptibility is gone and therefore the experience is lost**, ability to perceive [Prakruti] is also a must for us to experience Existence too! The problem is we never focus on the **Truth of existence** and miss it. When we focus on Sat then, and only then, can we identify with it- you may conceive it as the Lord- Bhakti, if you don't like the formless.

We always experience what is and what is not together e.g. mirage, rope and snake. Sky is not blue but blue exists and sky too exists. Like that only **You exist and in you all forms and names exist**. How does the universe appear in the

universe? It appears in You. All else borrows its reality from you, **you are Sat**, every experience points only to that.

Tatvadarshi- those who have made it their second nature to see **the Sat** in everything they experience, and the world as mithya in me. One mahatma in the Himalayas used to say ‘ki drushti aisi honi chahiye [viewpoint should be such].’

In conclusion, one can say that to experience this manifest universe and all that is unmanifest, duality i.e. a subject / object relationship is a must, at the same time the illusion of separation arises- the ‘ego,’ is born and it rolls on, into samsara, with its accompanying delusions, of fear and doubt, which when experienced to an unbearable degree, push one to recognise and experience the unicity of existence – simply termed **That** and **That Thou art**, liberating one into the ‘Haven of Freedom’ once awake!

Notes on the following shlokas from Shankar bhasya only:

Shloka 17

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित्कर्तुमर्हति ॥ 17॥

Know that alone to be imperishable which pervades this universe; for no one has power to destroy this indestructible substance

Avinashi- Indestructible- how? Because it is unchangeable.

All difference is only in Maya not in Brahman, the essence is One. That which pervades all manifestation, meaning THAT, is not accessible to senses, and yet in the second line – asya which means THIS, reality pointing it out, is not beyond our reach, because all of this is pervaded by THAT, so That is available to us.

Shloka 18

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।
अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युध्यस्व भारत ॥ 18॥

All these bodies pertaining to the imperishable, immeasurable, and eternal soul, are spoken of as perishable; therefore, Arjuna, fight.

Apremeya- meaning immeasurable.

The measure or knowledge of anything, is got through means of knowledge called pramanas - 6 pramanas described are: {Anupalabdhi not found, anumana inference, pratyaksha direct perception, upama similitude, arthapatti – assumption, and shabda scriptures and word of sages}

THAT is not available to any means of knowledge, except shabda [word of sages and scriptures], because of it being the SUBJECT [presence and absence of objects are revealed by consciousness without which, nothing could be experienced, hence it is evident as cause of experience.]

Satta sphurti – means the world shines forth from the ISNESS. The Lord then says- therefore fight, meaning that there is absolutely no valid reason, for you to desist from fighting. Not as an order but as a rationale. It is the false notion of Arjuna, that in the battle he will be the killer of Bhishma, and others and that being the cause of his delusion and grief, he is now told thus.

So far Shri Krishna:

Verse 11,12,13 – we are not the body, The in-dweller does not die

Verse 14- Overcoming Dvandva and becoming a dhira

Verse 15- Dhira is equanimous and becomes ready for liberation

Verse 16 – It is eternal, what is Real

Verse 17- It is all-pervading-sarvamidam

Verse 18 - It is indestructible, not limited / not an object of knowledge / therefore go ahead and fight. Anaashino and aprameya [cannot be grasped by the senses]

Further in:

Sh. 19

य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।

उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥ 19॥

Both of these are ignorant, he who considers the soul capable of killing and he who takes it as killed; for verily the soul neither kills nor is killed.

The Lord explains he who looks upon the Self as the slayer and the Self as the slain, both know not what is right. Who is slain? And who is the slayer? [body is slain and slayed by the sukshma sharira- the Self is untouched.]

Who is the Karta and Bhokta? – Jivatma – body, mind + atma [consciousness that is associated with body mind.] Shri Ram Krishna says one can consider all is done by the Lord, I am just an instrument/ servant of the Lord. The problem of identification is the cause of suffering.

Ajnyana ki prathistha mat karo, jnyana ko sthapit karo. [do not establish ignorance stabilise Knowledge]

Why Maya? why space time causation? Why this creation? – [desh kaala kaaran]- The very question is invalid because, talking about a cause does not make sense outside causation e.g., once time has begun one can ask before or after a certain time, but before time has begun the question is irrelevant, same with space – what is outside space?

The body undergoes 6 changes, according to Vedanta:

- (1) asti or present in the womb, (2) jAyate or born, (3) vardhatE or grows, (4) pariNamate or becomes old, (5) apakShlyate or decays and (6) vinashyati or dies.

How can action done now produce an effect without connection? There are 3 effects – drushta: 1. Immediately seen and 2. psychological effect, and 3. adrushta – where the connection cannot be established. Cosmic connection as per Purva mimamsa, doing yajnyas i.e. fire sacrifices etc., one can attain going to heaven is based on faith, invisible factor -adrushta -carries this result. God is the Karmaphala Daata – God is the connector. If fire is the connector – Agni Devata takes it too the specific God so your father may reach heaven. [then throw your father to the fire says Charvak philosophy, it does not believe in after-life.]

Vedanta will deny karma in the ultimate sense. In Vyavarihika [transactional reality] sat, there is karma. Science has no answer to why? Something happened they can answer how? E.g. bacteria or collagen disease- is everything then accidental, random?

Shloka 20

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचि
नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।

अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे || 20 ||

*The soul is never born, nor it ever dies; nor does it become after being born.
For, it is unborn, eternal, everlasting and primeval; even though the body is
slain, the soul is not.*

Swami Rama says we live in two realities one is in the field of the mind and therefore in the true sense not real for it is passing and the other, is the basis of the mind, and which, therefore, cannot be grasped by the mind. Sat is that which exists and asat is that which does not exist [eternally]. Thus, the mind is able to grasp only asat because it is the cause of duality, it perceives objects. We have to break this habit of the mind which is engrossed in identifying with objects and all that is fleeting. Once that is done the mind will subside into the sat element in us, and truth will stand revealed.

Shri Krishna continues to explain Na jaayate - we were never born, na mriyate va- therefore we will never die; naayam bhutva na bhuyah - we have never undergone any change, and we will never undergo any change. Eknath describes what happens to the deity in the Guruvayur temple in Kerala- the Lord is worshipped in his infant form in the morning, for whom only tenderness can arise, in the afternoon as a young handsome man with flute and a peacock feather ever so attractive, and in the evening as an elderly man just able to stand or walk- depicting how the form- body- changes, with age, but the spirit within is immutable, eternal.

Now look at the beauty of what we are being told. In the earlier verse Shri Krishna says that which has no permanent existence never was, and that which is permanent is forever there, this truth has been seen by the sages. To understand this permanent principle the Atman, we have only to look at our lives and we find that we were new born, infant, child, adolescent, adult, middle aged person and now nearly old persons – so where and what is real? Have ‘you- the Atman’ experienced being born? Will you experience death? Rebirth? jab janma hi nahee to punar janma kaisa? [when you were never born, how can there be rebirth?]

Only that which was watching this entire play of name and form, that witness consciousness which was never born and will never die- that consciousness- Atman - is the only eternal truth which cannot be killed because it was never born. The name and form, either dies or can be killed, but that which observed this body and resided in it, is the Atman, and that can never be killed.

Shankara: He is not born; no such change of condition as birth takes place in the Self. Nor does He die, this denies the — last change of condition called death, construed with the denial of every change, thus : He is never born, never dies, and so on. For, the Self, having once existed, does not afterwards cease to be. In ordinary parlance, he is said to die who, having once existed, afterwards ceases to be. Wherefore He is unborn. For, he is said to be born who, having not existed, comes into existence. Not so is the Self. Wherefore He is unborn. and because of which He does not die, He is eternal. [Though, by the denial of the first and the last changes, all changes have been denied, yet it is thought necessary to directly deny the intermediate changes, in the words 'unchangeable,' so as to imply the absence of all such changes of condition as motion, though not specified here.] He is unchangeable: He is constant, not subject to the change of condition known as decline (apakshaya). Having no parts, He does not diminish in His own substance. As devoid of qualities, He does not diminish by loss of a quality. He is primeval, not subject to the change known as growth (vrladdhi) as opposed to decline. For, that which increases in size by the accretion of parts is said to grow and to be renewed. As devoid of parts, the Self was as fresh in the past (as He is now or will be in future; i.e. He is ever the same); He never grows. And He is not slain when the body is slain: He is not transformed when the body is transformed. To avoid tautology, slaying is interpreted to mean transformation: the Self is not subject to transformation. This verse teaches the absence in the Self of the six* bhava-vikaras, of the six vikdvas or changes of condition to which all bhavas or beings in the world are subject. The passage, on the whole, means that the Self is devoid of all sorts of change. Hence the words in the previous verse, "both these know not alright."

Having started (in ii. 19) the proposition that the Self is neither the agent nor the object of the action of slaying and having stated in the next verse the

immutability of the Self as the reason for that statement, the Lord concludes the proposition as follows:

He who knows the Self (described in the last verse – the enlightened Being) as indestructible, i.e., devoid of the final change called death, as eternal, i.e., devoid of change called transformation, as unborn and inexhaustible, i.e., devoid of birth and decline, how does an enlightened man of this description do the act of slaying, or how does he cause another to slay?

वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजमव्ययम् ।

कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ कं घातयति हन्ति कम् ॥ 21 ॥

Arjuna, the who knows this soul to be imperishable; eternal and free from birth and decay- how and whom will he cause to be killed, how and whom will he kill?

Shankar on sh.21: he who knows the Self as indestructible - avinashinam, devoid of transformation - avyaya, devoid of birth – ajam - how does he cause another to slay him? Nor does he slay another. The Lord is teaching denial of all action here; slaying being taken as an example only.

Objection: How can slaying be denied for such a person?

Answer: Because the Self has already been described as immutable.

Objection: true the Self has been said to be immutable – but this is like saying a man who has known, an immovable pillar, can have no action to do. [this presupposes a difference in knowing from being.]

Ans: The objection does not apply for the enlightened man is **IDENTICAL with the SELF**. The Self is imagined [by Buddhi] to be enlightened because of Avidya – this is not the case, the Enlightened Being, is the Self. **The Self is one and a non-agent. Works are meant for the unenlightened, for he thinks he is the agent of action and thus such a man who thinks he slays and can get slayed – both these do not know aright. Knowledge of the Immutable Self is possible.**

Objection: If Self is the non-agent devoid of the six changes – how can such a conviction arise as given above.

Ans: Objection does not apply because otherwise the scriptures would not proclaim it so.

Opponent: Self is inaccessible to any sense.

Ans: Not so. The scriptures say “It can be seen by the mind alone” [Bri.Up.iv., 4, 19]

The enlightened should resort to Jnana Yoga. The knowledge that thus arises dispels ignorance-its opposite.

Question: What, then, has he to do?

Ans: This has been answered in Ch 3 sh. 3 – all sankhyas should resort to Jnana yoga and the Lord will teach renunciation of all works in Ch.5 sh. 13 – renouncing all actions by thought, the self-controlled man rests happily in the nine gated city- in the body- neither acting nor causing to act.

Objection: Here thought implies that there is no renunciation of acts of speech or body.

Ans No, all thought means all actions of speech, and body, for mental activity precedes any act.

Objection: this must indicate that the disembodied soul of the enlightened man deposits all activity and rests happily.

Ans: It cannot be so for sanyas means renounce, deposit and rests, necessarily indicates a place to rest in, the nine gated city- the body. Therefore, the Gita Sastra teaches, that he who has acquired a knowledge of the Self, should resort to renunciation only. He should not resort to works [agnihotra yajnyas etc. as these are all kaamyas karma-desire oriented]

Notes from Tadatmanand before the following verses:

Arjuna is incapacitated due to his emotional reactions to the war, as he is horrified to be killing his beloved Pitamaha, Guru etc. Arjuna is not grieving the death of the body but the subtle body- personality. The loss is for those who remain behind, do you like sleep, then I assure you, you, will enjoy being dead! The grief of losing this personality can be handled, but to handle utter non-existence, is difficult to reconcile to. The physical and subtle bodies are co-

existent – and cannot be separated [till death of physical body]. If they are not me, then what am I? Satchidananda -Pure consciousness [that body is not “you or yours” it is a body.]

Shloka 22

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय
नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा
न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥ 22 ॥

As a man shedding his worn-out garments, takes another new one, likewise the embodied soul, casting off worn out bodies, enters into others that are new.

We do not see things as they are, we identify ourselves as the body, and form attachments to all its relations and then feel anxiety and fear. Attachment to relationships brings about confusion. Shri Krishna now explains to Arjuna we are not only that which meets the eye, that is only the garment of the eternal divine being within us, and as we do not grieve when we change our external garments, we should not do so, when the body is changed as well. This verse talks about the change in the body as one would change old worn-out clothes, this is generally the background of the philosophy of reincarnation. But we do not have to believe in reincarnation, this life is headache enough, let us not forget the goal and that is to love the Lord here and now as far as our capacity goes.

Even when we have everything the world can offer, we do not feel complete and therefore we feel curious to find out the meaning of existence. It is due to wrong identification of this mind with the external objects, that we are held captive by attachments. Arjuna feels despondent and sad, Shri Krishna shows him with great compassion that to the discriminating intellect, it is clear that the body which was a newborn, youth and which undergoes so many changes, is surely not the Self. Once we see through the coverings of the true Self, we no longer grieve for the passing of this body, which is verily like a garment. That which is unchanging, and eternal simply throws the body, and assumes a new form even as when we are in the body, we change our garments when they get

old. ***With right observation and identification death will no longer terrify, and life will no longer delude!***

Is this verse-22- about Atma- or sukshma sharira? – the one who travels, is the sukshma sharira. The traditional drushtanta is of the Sun reflected in buckets of water- the bucket is the physical body-sthool sharira, the water is the sukshma sharia and the reflected sun is the reflected consciousness [chidabhaas].

Shloka 23

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।

न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥ 23 ॥

Weapons cannot cut nor fire burn it; water cannot wet it nor wind dry it.

Shri Krishna is elucidating the qualities of the quality-less, timeless, formless consciousness within, which cannot be cut burnt, made wet or dried. The five elements have no sway over it for it is the basis on which the elements manifest. This infinite Atman that resides in this body cannot be described, as that which is described as an object can be presented to the senses or mind, but the Atman is the subject so as soon as we describe It, we negate it. Hence, the Vedas describe It as Neti, Neti which means not this, not this!

In Chapter 13 Sri Krishna further clarifies what or who is the Knower of this field of Prakruti and that Knower is what we are. Therefore, the elements of Prakruti can have no effect on it.

Shloka 25

अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽयमुच्यते ।

तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥ 25 ॥

The soul is unmanifest; it is incomprehensible and it is spoken of as immutable. Therefore, knowing it as such you should not grieve.

That which is eternal within us, that which became manifest in this form, that which illumines this body is pure consciousness it cannot be cut, burnt, drowned or desiccated. These changes apply to the body only. So, if one identifies with the body alone then self (body) preservation becomes the prime

object of life. Then every possible means is used to prolong the physical experience even as medical science is doing – transplanting organs and now even the head!

Eknathji (has taken 23 / 24 / 25/ together) explains Arjuna is still unable to grasp what Shri Krishna means by “Self”. In Shloka 25 Shri Krishna is trying to awaken Arjuna to the truth of our existence, the Self. Shri Krishna describes this with three words beginning with ‘a’ which means not: avyakto- not manifest, achintyo – not thinkable, avikaryo – not changeable. The divinity within is not within our objective experience for that is what we truly are, so if it is the subject obviously it cannot come in the purview of manifestation and it is also therefore unthinkable and unchangeable. There has to be an unchanging base on which change can be experienced. St. Francis has beautifully indicated the truth by the simple statement “That which you are looking for, is looking!” Eknath goes on to highlight the Vyakta -manifestation, he says, is the finite mortal physical spell, we are hypnotised into believing that, that is the only reality. In the word avyakta we are reminded that we are infinite.

We can quite easily grasp that to perceive the finite, there must be an infinite, to perceive the changing, there must be an unchangeable, to perceive thoughts there must be the unthinkable. QED[quite easily done]. The physico-psychical complex is so absorbing, that we incessantly talk to ourselves, and believe there is a thinker who is thinking these thoughts, like there is an I who speaks and an I who acts. In meditation when thoughts get suspended, the Self is revealed, we feel the peace emanating, love flowing, and a truly non-judgemental view unfolds before us, and for the first time we experience the manifest world as is! The space of awareness, in which thoughts manifest themselves, is the True Perceiver of all appearance, thought being the subtlest of all appearance! For the first time it can be appreciated that there is no thinker, the mind is merely a bundle of thoughts, emotions, desires, memories and a pseudo ‘I’. This conglomerate with which we so easily identify is explained as the Antahkaran [inner instrument- antah- is inner, karan means instrument] It comprises of manas- the mind that receives the data and presents it to the Buddhi- Intellect for decision making, and the Chitta- storehouse of memories for ready refence when we press the search button,

and finally the Ahankar or Ego which is that deluded aspect, closest to consciousness, which identifies with the body mind complex. This antahkaran is given to us by Prakruti to transact in the world of Maya. *We cannot function as it were with pure Awareness alone- imagine a surgeon without a scalpel- what good can he do? Now imagine the scalpel believing itself to be the surgeon and what harm that would result in! It's little wonder the world is topsy turvy!*

Shloka 27

जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ 27 ॥

For, in that case death is certain for the born and rebirth is inevitable for the dead. You should not, therefore, grieve over the inevitable.

Shri Krishna chides Arjuna for his naivety. For the one who is born death is inevitable and for the dead, birth is inevitable when that is the case, where is the cause for lamenting? The body is made of five elements, from dust thou come and unto dust thou return, this is with regard to the body, but not the consciousness that dwells in it. So why grieve over that which by its very nature is temporal. That which dies is sure to be reborn, and that which is born is sure to die, hence, where is the cause for sorrow, for a wise man?

Here Sri Krishna is teasing Arjuna, who is still identified with the body. He says the body is sure to die and that which dies is sure to be reborn- what then is there to grieve? The body is after all only the packaging, as we progress, we see less and less of the packaging, and more and more into the eyes of the Lord dwelling inside- until we see only the Lord in all. The mystics tell us we should not be concerned with the packaging but the contents therein.

Personally, I am totally unaware of birth and rebirth, and I trust Shri Krishna and my Gurus who tell us there is such a happening. Yet the concept appeals, for in such a cosmos (order) there cannot be random events- is what I feel. Be that as it may - we must do the best with what we have got- this birth- we know it and we want to get out of suffering- is there a way? Sri Krishna is showing us the way.

Shloka 28

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।

अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥ 28 ॥

Arjuna, before birth beings are not manifest to our human senses; on death they return to the unmanifest again. They are manifest only in the interim between birth and death. What occasion then for lamentation.

The term 'one is born' itself signifies that one came from somewhere else, that is the unmanifest state and became manifest to the senses in this time space zone. After death again we return to the unmanifest state. However, by carefully studying this manifest apparent state, we can understand the thread of the infinite that passes through this dimension, and get over the illusion of birth and death. An analogy from daily life further explains - we all speak every day of the sun rising and setting, for that is the limited experience of our senses, and yet we know for a fact that, the sun neither sets nor rises it is just always there!

As soon as the ovum is fertilised the seed is ready for the form to appear. Swami Veda used to tell us - this is not just a physical event. There are three souls involved- the father, mother and the baby to be, when this prerequisite is arrived at, the seed is allowed to take form. So, there is an entity in the unmanifest realm waiting to become a form in the mrityu lok - the realm of time and space. Once the form is taken it becomes available to our senses and mind - this does not mean it did not exist prior or will not exist later. It is indeed true that we experience only the name and form, however, the possibility of supra sensory realms is indicated here and must be understood. This world as it appears to us is like a torch shining on a string, the beginning of which is not seen nor the end- the middle portion is lit and life is experienced in this world.

In the above shlokas Shri Krishna explains the very nature of this manifest form and name, which is the perishable and inevitably will merge into the five elements from which it took birth- then what cause is there for grief? The point is, only a deluded person grieves over that which is inevitable- such a person is actually a '*krupana*' because he is far away from the Truth.

Shloka 31

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।

धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत्क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥ 31 ॥

Besides, considering your own duty too, you should not waver for there is nothing more welcome for the man of the warrior class than a righteous war.

The true meaning of the word Dharma is that which supports, doing one's duty in every ashram of life, following the Varnashram system, is Dharma. It has nothing to do with religion caste or community. It encompasses all dimensions of life both within and without. Heaven and hell are realities one creates, with his thoughts, deeds and habit patterns. We all suffer at some time from an inner conflict of 'what is right action for me?' This is because our desire contradicts our duty, as soon as one can separate the two, the path becomes clear and can be taken joyfully, as well as without attachment to the fruit, for after all we are only doing our duty so why should we expect praise or blame?

Shri Krishna does not allow Arjuna to lapse into escaping his duty, for any reason, particularly, as Arjuna was quoting the scriptures, or any philosophy that absolves him from doing his duty. Arjuna is the best archer in the world, and it is his prime duty to lead his army to victory, he cannot at this stage abandon his post out of sheer attachment. Many a time we have to face a situation in our own life, when we feel like running away from what we are expected to do, and this is usually due to the effort required to hold on. Yet, we justify it, with many supporting arguments, this is the way of the ego which can turn white into black and visa-versa to suit its convenience. At such a time we need to fight with faith and go against our ego to do what is right.

Swadharma definition [meanings of Dharma are many] Swadharma depends on the Varnashram Dharma, which divides society into: Brahmins [Priests and scholars]/ Kshatriyas [warrior class] / Vaishyas [business class] and Sudras [working class], according to their aptitudes, not necessarily by birth. The word varna in varnashrama could be vishesha [specific role e.g. doctor, teacher,] or sadharan [general attitude-ahimsa, satya, asteya etc] This is what was meant in ancient times. Swabhika dharma-what is your nature what is your tendency or aptitude like? They come from Svabhava. There are two words in Sanskrit:

Swabhava refers to our subtle body, it is different for each and everybody. Swarupa- is deeper, it refers to what we truly are- Satchidananda. Krishna uses the same words in this shloka that Arjuna has used in the first chapter, eg. Kampita, Vepatha etc, to describe his own condition.

Shloka 38

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।

ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ 38॥

Treating alike victory and defeat, gain and loss, pain and pleasure, get ready for the battle; fighting thus you will not incur sin.

Eknath reminds us that the great war, is always with the Ego, and it nearly always lasts an entire lifetime, even if we are determined and aware. The easiest way is to view equally victory and defeat/ gain and loss/ pain and pleasure for that is the best sadhana. The hallmark of the Ego is to gloat in victory and suffer anguish in defeat, to cling to pleasure and avoid pain, to crave gain and prevent loss. This is so because the Ego is the cause of the sense of separation from others, and is adept at appropriating, so as to consolidate itself and hence it compels us into the three great impurities greed, anger, and lust – these are to be transcended. If one puffs up with pride on being praised and wilts if criticised, it means that we depend on the evaluation of others of our worth, and are not secure in oneself. To look within, and be the true Self, leads to such a sense of completeness that it matters little, what the external circumstances, whether favourable or unfavourable, render to us. When we undertake any action not attached to the fruit thereof, we do not incur any sin, because we are totally surrendered and that means, the action is being undertaken for it is our duty to do so irrespective of gain or loss.

In a world full of vanity, we are forever expecting applause, simple pat on the back is not enough, nowadays the number of likes a photograph got, or the number of followers / friends one has on social media determines the worth of a person. What irony that there is an illusion within an illusion! Here we are being prodded to wake up to the Real- how? By treating the pairs of opposites equally - this is possible to practise. To some it may even seem a contradictory advise for they believe they are born to feel sad, to feel glad, to be excited, to be depressed - well then, they should ask themselves- should there be so much

excitement / depression that you die laughing / crying? Even the balance is lost when one depends on outside props, to uphold our notion of ourselves and never realise the truth. To the one who is determined to find the truth every suggestion towards the goal from the One who is Truth incarnate- Shri Krishna- is the gospel and must be followed. Just offer every action and its fruit, treating the pairs of opposites equally, at His lotus feet and no sin (karma) can then accrue.

Shloka 45

त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।

निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥ 45 ॥

Arjuna, the Vedas thus deal with the evolutes of the three gunas (modes of Prakruti) viz. Worldly enjoyments and the means of attaining such enjoyments be thou indifferent to these enjoyments and their means, rising above pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain etc. established in the eternal existence (God) absolutely unconcerned about the fulfilment of wants and the preservation of what has been already attained you be self-controlled.

The Vedas explain the characteristics of the three Gunas. Sattva is that quality which brings equilibrium, peace and goodwill. Rajo Guna brings hyperactivity, greed and Tamas is destructive, unhelpful and animal in nature.

Arjuna is urged to go beyond these three gunas which constitute the entire phenomenal world. Tamas can be converted to rajas by paying more attention to the work one is doing, by continuing to work even when one is bored and never to postpone anything. Rajas can also be transformed into Sattva by developing forgiveness. It is not enough to transform tamas into rajas and rajas into sattva; it is imperative to go beyond these three gunas, for then one goes beyond time, space and causality into the infinite, eternal and immortal, here and now.

Nisargadutta Maharaj always emphasised that the body and this material world, is made up of the five elements, and it is the permutation combination of the proportion of the three Gunas that propel action, there is no one doing anything we as conscious human BEINGS need to realise this and behave accordingly, suddenly all judgement will stop, all opinions will end and we will experience a freedom heretofore never imagined. **Take a moment right now**

and be yourself as what you are pure, pure, consciousness without gender, name, commitments, judgements, time and space.

Shloka 47

**कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ 47 ॥**

Your right is to work only and never to the fruit thereof. Do not consider yourself to be the cause of the fruit of action; nor let your attachment be to inaction.

This is one of the title shlokas of the Bhagvad Gita and it is here that Shri Krishna gives practical instruction, leaving behind all theory. Swami Rama gives us the deeper meaning he says suffering comes, when one is interested in reward. If one performs actions expecting rewards, he is bound to receive the fruits of his actions. The fruits then motivate him to do more actions, and in this way, he finds himself caught in the whirlpool of life, never content, always seeking more and more for himself and ignoring or using others for his own gain. Actions done for reward thus create bondage.

The Gita is a forceful call to action but the action in which the right goal (selfless) is pursued by the right means.

Whenever we undertake any action, we always start it because we anticipate a certain result, but the certain result is never certain! This is so because in spite of one's best efforts the result depends on various other factors which cannot be computed. Even the time and space in which the action is undertaken cannot be standardised, e.g., we can put in our best efforts for an exam but can never predict the marks we will get- that depends on many an unknown factor- including the mood of the examiner! It is quite logically understandable actually, that the result of the action, is just not in our total control, this is all we are asked to remember and hence if we surrender the fruit of the action at the feet of the Lord, we will be free of the anxiety and fear we regularly feel. This knowledge may drive us to not do, anything at all, for we do not know the outcome, let's just be lazy and do nothing. Thus, we may form an attachment to inaction. Shri Krishna warns us against this very possibility. He therefore, emphasises do your duty, which is generally clear unless we allow other factors to delude us, and at the same time surrender the fruit of action.

This applies to sadhana as well!!! (my opinion). Just practise, practise, practise the result – transcendence- is not in one's control. Here, even less so, for the one who is practising must be transcended- paradox eh? That is Shri Krishna for us.

Shloka 48

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।

सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥ 48 ॥

Arjuna, perform your duties established in Yoga, renouncing attachment, and be even minded in success and failure; evenness of mind is called 'Yoga'.

When one learns to enjoy the beauty and grandeur of non-attachment, he acquires the ability to love his duties, and comes to experience the offering of the fruits of action as the highest of joys. Remember the example of the lotus which arises from the water, but its petals remain untouched, and that of the sun which shines equally on all, irrespective of what is happening in the world. These are symbols of the yoga of equanimity- Swami Rama.

Arjuna is called to first establish himself in Yoga, and renounce attachment, which will then make him even minded. Yoga, Shri Krishna defines as simply Samatvam is to be equanimous, to be serene. The root of the word yoga is yuja to join, union – what might you ask unites with what? The ego unites with the Self- very easily practised if we see that within us there is always a conflict between *manas and Buddhi*. Manas is that part of the mind which processes the data, labels experience as pleasant or unpleasant and it is the Buddhi that decides what action must be performed. When there is a union of both, meaning the Manas loves to do what the Buddhi has decided. On waking up early for sadhana, the Manas presents many an argument against it, and often times we give in, now if Manas presented it as the most pleasant thing to do, there would be no conflict. Thus, to bring Manas in alignment with Buddhi is the goal on the practical level.

When attachment is renounced the action is done for the sake of the action itself. For e.g. an artist paints not for the accolades he may get from his creation but the sheer joy it brings him/her when he is totally immersed and united with his art. The same may be applied to a surgeon, a musician, a carpenter anyone at all. To be so united with the action, is impossible, without having total

equilibrium or evenness of mind, this happens when there is no fear of failure or anticipation of success. This then is yoga in skilful action, for during that action our ego is out of the way, and we are united with the action!

The moment is all there is, the past and future drop away when one is yoga yukta [enjoined to yoga].

Shloka 49

दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनञ्जय ।

बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ॥ 49।

Action with a selfish motive is far inferior to this Yoga in the form of equanimity. Do seek refuge in this equipoise of mind, Arjuna; for poor and wretched are those who are the cause in making their actions bear fruit.

We have a right to do, as given in the earlier shloka but none whatsoever to the fruit thereof. However, the action we perform must be accompanied with a certain attitude and the use of the Buddhi too. The attitude should be one of equanimity, to the result. **The Buddhi must question – will this act lead me to Moksha- liberation?** The action with this attitude and intellect leads to the truth, otherwise it is a mere ritual. There are many who verbalise Krishnarpanamastu [surrender to Krishna], but indulge in everything that leads to sense gratification. So, our intellect forms an important part in karma. Shri Krishna shows the difference in the karma one does *with* this intellect, and without. With such a noble mind the karma is also noble. When the Buddhi is not purified with this noble attitude and surrender, it leads to bondage.

A person who thinks he is responsible for swarga or victory/loss in karma, is a krupana or underprivileged and he is going to have rebirths. Whereas the action performed with the intellect- Buddhi, which is purified with the knowledge that the reward is not in his control, and readily surrenders it at the feet of the Lord, that action - karma is noble. An action performed without involving the intellect, is a mere ritual and is considered very inferior. So, Arjuna is advised that applying his intellect, not aspiring for trivial rewards, like swarga, he should do his duty. He should resort to this type of understanding.

As discussed in the introduction, Shri Krishna could have easily dispelled the despondency, with ‘pep talk’ but that is not the way of the Guru, He is only

waiting for this moment, when for the first time a disciple sees hazily that there must be a deeper truth. The Lord is now guiding Arjuna to transcendence and giving him the practices, that will lead him out of the pit of misery, to perennial joy.

When one is chanting, it should have depth of feeling and it will become a noble action. One performing actions with the thought of receiving rewards often gets the desired result. This appears positive but it is repeatedly denounced. Why? Because actions performed due to selfish motives, are far inferior to actions performed due to selfless motives. Selfless action leads to balance and equanimity. In fact, Swami Vivekanand has said 'Do not desire, why? For the desire will be fulfilled.'

Those who surrender the outcome or results to the Lord, suffer no anxiety, no fear and above all have an equanimous mind. The activities performed with a spiritual intelligence, removes all suffering in the world and leads to liberation from material existence. Contrarily, activities performed for the acquisition of rewards assuredly results in suffering, even while performing as anxiety about the result is paramount, and also because it binds to material existence. Phala-hetavah are those whose sole motivation is dictated by the prospects of reward. It should be understood that such of us are kripnah or pitiable, acting in this way they are imprisoned in material existence, unable to attain their spiritual nature.

Kripnah refers to those who are unable to understand the meaning of nishkama- karma-yoga. Such people are attached to the fruits of their activities, and consequently, they are sometimes happy and sometimes distressed. The story given in the Brihad-aranyaka Upanishad illustrates this. Once, there was a great assembly of realised sages, Maharshis and Brahmarishis in the royal court of Janaka Maharaja. Janaka Maharaja, assisted by his royal servants, brought hundreds of milk-giving cows along with their beautiful calves to that assembly. The horns of the cows were encased in gold and their hooves in silver. Beautiful cloth decorated with golden ornaments graced their backs. Folding his hands, Janaka Maharaja addressed the sages with great humility. "Whoever among you is brahma- veta (a knower of brahma), I beg you to come and accept these cows."

All assembled there began to whisper amongst themselves. No one dared come forward to establish himself as brahmavetta and take the cows. Again, Janaka Maharaja looked towards them, with all seriousness. This time the Maharshi Yajnavalkya got up and told his students, "O brahmacharis, take these cows to my ashrama."

Hearing this, the other Maharishis objected, saying, "Are you a brahma-vetta?" Maharshi Yajnavalkya said, "I offer my obeisance at the feet of those who are brahma-vetta. If you want to examine me or ask any question, please do so."

The various sages asked different questions and Yajnavalkya Maharshi gave them befitting answers. At last, the greatly learned Gargi humbly enquired, "Who is a krupana and who is a brahmana?"

Yajnavalkya Maharshi's response to this was: yo va etad aksharam Gargi aviditvasmal lokat praiti sa krupanah (Brihad- aranyaka Upanishad 3.8.10). "O Gargi, that person is a krupana (miser) who leaves this world without knowing The Indestructible, the Infallible Absolute Reality."

In Shrimad-Bhagavatam (6.9.49) it is said: krupanah . . . gunavastu- drik. "Kripanas are those who consider that the ultimate reality consists only of sense objects produced from the material modes." Furthermore, it is stated in Shrimad- Bhagavatam (11.19.44): krupano yo 'jitendriyah. "A kripana is a person who has no control over his senses."

The word Karpanya Dosha has been used by Arjuna to describe his condition in the 7th shloka, he knows well, that the cloud of delusion has overcome him.

The literal meaning of 'krupana' is miser, wretched, stingy with a miserable mind or 'Kanjoo'! The goal of life is realization of the Lord. Anyone who deserts this goal is considered a man of feeble, weak intellect and is also called a krupana, as he has not aspired to use the wealth of bliss which is his potential in this very life.

He is full of grief and anguish at all times, faint-hearted and timid. He is always seeking sympathy from others. He lacks qualities such as courage, valour and firmness. His mind is preoccupied by trepidations and apprehensions, and the intellect of that person cannot function smoothly. Grief to an extent is normal as grief is confined but apprehension is not. We grieve simply for what we know

has occurred but a krupana, continues to dread for what might happen. That person is incapable of making any appropriate, accurate decision.

If Karma yoga is to be practised following are the principles to do so. The way out of the Chakravayuh that we find ourselves in is this:

It is the Buddhi that has to be pure. To describe this body mind complex, the example of a chariot is given. The horses are the senses, the reins are the mind, the charioteer is the Buddhi, and the passenger is the Atma. If one has a charioteer like Shri Krishna, the destination is an assured one. The charioteer is the Buddhi, and this has to be pure if one has to realise the Self. How is this to be done?

The antahkaran [inner instrument] comprises of four aspects- manas, Buddhi, ahankara, and chitta. The manas is that part which presents the data gathered from the senses and is in a state of doubt, Buddhi is the decisive faculty and leader. Ahankara is the sense of identification we have with the body and the sense of a separate existence. It also has the ability to appropriate anything to build itself up, e.g., my spouse, my children, my house, my opinion, my likes, my aversions, desires and cravings. Chitta is the store house of memories and sanskaras, over this and previous lifetimes.

This antahkaran is the instrument given by Prakruti to this Purusha who is the akarta [non-doer] abhokta [non -enjoyer] to transact in this world. The Purusha alone cannot experience Prakruti in its manifold expression. What we do not know and what we are not taught, is who we truly are, and how to be stationed [stithapradnya] in that Being and then experience the Prakruti as it is. We get mesmerised by the instrument and believe ourselves to be the body, this is the chakravayuh. Once we know who we are we can use the instrument, as we may wield a stethoscope or pen.

The five ways by which this Buddhi can be purified, inspired and enlightened in order to practise Karma [Buddhi] Yoga skilfully are:

1. **Samatvam** – equanimity – that aspect which is capable of handling both sukha and dukkha, honour and dishonour, and not be perturbed. Mark that

even in sukha [happiness] experienced, in sense objects, the mind is not excited, craving for more.

2.Svadharmā- the Buddhi that knows what is right conduct and what is not, it should act according to its dharma, which like people may be compassionate, erudite like a Brahmin ought to be, or may be brave, generous like a Kshatriya, or have a sense of business like the Vaishya or may be like the Sudra who has a great sense of service. Whatever ones innate Dharma, one should follow that alone.

3.Samarpan every thought, word, action dedicated to Shri Krishna. Dedicate every thought, for before one speaks one thinks or at least should think, before one acts one thinks or at least should think, so when one dedicates the thought to the Beloved, then duality does not touch you, you cannot do anything wrong or bad or sinful for you have paused. That gave the Buddhi the opportunity to review, nowadays, even on the cricket field one can ask for a review- you get 10 secs. for it! The outcome then matters not, for we have given the very thought over to the Lord, so whatever accrues can only be His.

4.Asangha- Is without attachment. We become possessive and attached to things we like and also develop the opposite – aversion for what we dislike. If samarpan has been done, then it does not matter even if asangha takes time. Remembering the Lord all the time will develop attachment to Him, and all of these likes and dislikes, cravings and aversions slowly but surely fall away.

5.Prasaad-To receive every result/outcome exactly as though one is given prasaad in a temple; over which one can exercise no choice. It sometimes happens one receives something one dislikes but accepts it, as it is given by God.

When an action is done without fear, anxiety or apprehension- what will the mind be like? Placid, calm and cheerful for the outcome is of no concern, the action is done without attachment so no anticipation of blame or praise, the fear of losing or the excitement of gaining both are absent- an even keel is achieved and the ship of life floats on the sea of a calm mind so blissful – the peace that passeth all understanding. This is more an effect than a cause or practise for Buddhi- Karma yoga.

So, what is Krupana? the miserable situation that we all end up in, craving for sense objects, although endowed with the source of perennial anand. The term

really signifies how pathetic is this attitude, that we come with the possibility of BEING and leave by BECOMING this petty EGO. No, no, no not any, any longer- just surrender this blighted imposter and Grace shall flood our Antahkaran!

The Bhagvad Gita is not a treatise, it is a manual for daily life. When we practice this non-krupana attitude we will attain Chittaprasadanam and our Buddhi will become sthir [stable] and sukshma [subtle] attaining equanimity, and only then can we get stabilised in the Truth, knowing what the world is and what we are. This krupana is duren avaram- i.e. by far the most inferior attitude, so strive for realisation and even if we do not attain it in this life time, Shri Krishna in the 6th chapter of the Bhagvad Gita, has assured us that we will start again in the next lifetime exactly where we left off, and never come to grief.

Shloka 50

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।

तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥ 50 ॥

Endowed with equanimity one sheds in this life both good and evil. Therefore, strive for the practice of this yoga of equanimity. Skill in action lies in the practice of this yoga.

Swami Rama explains the term Buddhi Yoga as the action performed with a mental attitude of non-attachment to the fruits of the action. This is possible because the Buddhi has the ability to discriminate between Self and non-Self. Once that is clear it is easy.

Often the question is asked how one can undertake any action if there be no goal or desire for the fruit thereof. Both, Swami Rama sites the sages and Eknath says that they who have trodden the path show the way – they simply do action which is selfless and has the good of all at heart – then you may desire the fruit as much as you want!!

My mother loved this Shloka for she said Yoga lies in skilful action. One cannot be skilled in action without practise, one cannot be skilled without discipline, and one cannot be skilled if the mind is distracted by the thought of the fruit of action. As explained above equilibrium or evenness of mind comes to the

one who becomes united with what he is doing- Yoga is union. When one is so totally lost in what he is doing that it is meditation, skill automatically gets expressed and the fruit of the action is farthest from the mind. All of us have experienced these moments of total absorption which is Yoga then good or evil, lose their hold, for one has gone beyond both, all that remains is the action, not even the doer!

Shankara: Defines Kaushalam – skill as action which is done with the following qualifications-1. Swadharma It should be righteous, fulfilling one's responsibilities. 2. Samatvam – done with equanimity 3. It should be Ishwar samarpit- the fruit is accepted as prasad from God.

Notes from Shankara for sh. 51, 52, 53.

51. For, men of wisdom, possessing evenness of mind, cast off the fruit of works, i. e., escape from good and bad births. They then attain knowledge. While still alive, they are released from the bond of birth and attain the supreme abode of Vishnu —the state of moksha or liberation—which is free from all turmoils. Or the wisdom (buddhi) referred to in the three verses (sh.49—51) may be the Sankhya-(not the Yoga-) wisdom, the knowledge of the Absolute Reality, (corresponding to the wide-spread expanse of water), which arises when the mind is purified by Karma-Yoga; for, it is said in sh. 50 that wisdom directly brings about the destruction of good and bad deeds.

52. When your intuition (buddhi) shall cross beyond the mire of delusion, by which the sense of discrimination between the Self and the not-Self is confounded and the mind (antahkarana) is turned towards the objects of the senses i. e., when your reason attains purity—then will you attain to a disgust of what is yet to be heard and what has already been heard they will appear to you to be of no use

You may now ask: "When shall i attain the true Yoga or conviction of the Supreme Truth, by crossing beyond the mire of delusion and obtaining wisdom by discrimination of the Self?" Listen:

53. When your intuition (buddhi=antahkaran) which has been perplexed by what you have heard about the multifarious ends and means in all their relations—concerning the life of activity and the life of retirement—shall stand

firm, without distraction (vikshepa - viparyaya) and doubt (vikalpa -samsaya), in the Self (Samadhi, i.e., the objective point of your meditation), then you will attain Yoga, samadhi, i.e., the knowledge which arises from discrimination. The characteristic attributes of a perfect Sage.

Having found an occasion for interrogation, Arjuna asks with a desire to know the characteristic marks of one who has attained wisdom in steady contemplation (sarnadhi- prajnya)

Shloka 54

अर्जुन उवाच ।

स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।

स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत ब्रजेत किम् ॥ 54 ॥

Arjuna said: Krishna what are the characteristics of a God realised soul, stable of mind and established in Samadhi (perfect tranquillity of mind.) How does the man of the stable mind speak, how does he sit, how does he walk?

Swami Rama says Arjuna's question shows that he has come out of his state of despondency, he now intently follows Shri Krishna's teachings and wants to know the truth of inner discrimination. Today, more than at any other time we need to be able to decipher the true Guru from the false, it is so easy to be misled when we ourselves are in a state of utter confusion. A gentle, kind word, a demonstration of some 'so called' miracles, a herd mentality- (so many are going must be good, attitude) - all these can attract us to the extent that we are prepared to sell our freedom! It is therefore vital that we ask how can we be sure of the guide who is going to help us cross the ocean of life?

Ekknath says it is a brilliant question for it asks of Shri Krishna no theories, no spiritual mumbo jumbo just simply what are the practical signs of the illumined man who is united with the Lord.

Arjuna wants to be able to diagnose a Sthitapradnya so that he may be able to understand in depth what Shri Krishna is indicating. Arjuna is asking in detail the description of such a Being all his hallmarks- what does his speech convey, what is his asana- posture, like and where does he lead us, while walking. He is impelling Sri Krishna to give the description, so that he may also behave thus.

What it is that detracts the mind, what it is that makes it steady, how does a Self-realised one behave after attaining the Truth. The Guru is always in a relaxed and steady posture, he does not need to move, every gesture is graceful and made only if necessary.

Shankara: The characteristic attributes of a perfect Sage.

How is a man who has a firm conviction, that he is the Supreme Brahman, and who is intent on contemplation, (samadhi), —how is such a man spoken of by others? How does the man of steady knowledge himself speak? How does he move, does he sit? Arjuna asks in order to know what the characteristic attributes of a man of steady knowledge (sthitaprajnya) are. From sh. 55 to the end of the Discourse (adhyaya), the characteristic attributes of a man of steady knowledge, as well as the means of obtaining that knowledge are taught to him who, having from the very commencement, renounced all works, has entered upon a course of Devotion to Knowledge (jnyana-yoga-nishtha), as well as to him who has reached that stage by means of Devotion to works (Karma- yoga). For, everywhere in spiritual science (adhyatma- sastra), the very characteristic attributes, of the successful Yogin. are taught as the means (of attaining that stage), since they are to be attained by effort. The Lord now points out those characteristic attributes which, as attainable by effort, constitute the means as well.

Shloka 55

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान् ।

आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥ 55 ॥

Shri Bhagwan said: Arjuna when one thoroughly casts off all cravings of the mind and is satisfied in the Self through the joy of the Self he is then called stable of mind.

Shloka 56

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।

वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥ 56 ॥

The sage whose mind remains unperturbed amid sorrows whose thirst for pleasure has altogether disappeared, who is free from passion, fear and anger is called stable of mind.

Shloka 57

यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।

नाभिनिन्दति न दवेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ 57 ॥

He who is unattached to everything and meeting with good and evil neither rejoices nor recoils his mind is stable.

The three shlokas we take together as they explain the traits of the Sthitapradnya and address Arjuna's question.

Swami Rama says the Self is known by the Self alone and not by any other means. Once this knowing is firm the attraction towards worldly objects, thoughts and/or emotions vanishes. Such a man of wisdom is stable of mind. The practical implications of this knowledge are that, he no longer gets deluded by appearances, and can actually feel the ephemeral nature of events, as he is forever in the witness mode of consciousness, even when asleep. For then the pendulum swing of pleasure and pain, good and evil no longer holds him captive.

Eknath reminds us it is as though Shri Krishna is asking 'Do you not desire Samadhi? Are you still in the grip of craving and aversion? Fear and anger?' The one who is no longer pulled by pleasure or pulled by pain is the Sthitapradnya. Happiness which is created by building tension and releasing it, is sense-pleasure, law of diminishing consumption and utility, like an addiction is the happiness, of the world. It is a natural human tendency to want only pleasure, as if we could ever do so. This is the illusion, we are always trying to separate pain and pleasure, they are not two they are one, the only secret lies in seeing through the game. This is possible. The sages have done it and so can we, only if we are willing to grow, it cannot be forced on us however great the Guru or kind the Guru is. **We must also look in to see is our desire for truth genuine or just superficial do we truly, truly want the truth?**

'The unexamined life is not worth living' Socrates. Shravana [listening], Manana [reflecting, contemplating], Nidhidhyasana [steady meditation] are the means by which ingrained patterns in us can be eradicated. Realisation must be actualised. It must be manifested- does it take me beyond suffering of this life?

The man of wisdom (Sthitapradnya) has done it. He has gone beyond the pair of opposites, which are actually inseparable conjoint twins! He is established in his SELF, and therefore is complete no longer in any kind of lack. Seeing clearly the nature of samsara, he is unattached, free from fear and anger. When we are totally ignorant of the deeper meaning of life, we are 100% sure that wealth will grant us the freedom, to get what we want and we will be more and more free, as we expand our wealth and estate! Sometimes a lifetime passes in this illusion, not realising that it actually leads to bondage, how much more would we want to stick on to this life if we had enormous wealth? How much more would we have to work to ensure no one took it away from us? Would that lead to freedom or bondage? What if we got an incurable disease would wealth save us?

However, with the grace of the Guru or some curiosity on our part we start to wonder if there might be something grander, than what the world, has heretofore offered us. On deeper reflection we sense that it is not how it seemed – the very reason of our bondage is so called wealth, attachment to our near and dear ones and habit patterns- these do not liberate, they bind us to a kind of compulsive behaviour which then we have to struggle to change. The man of wisdom has seen through this game and his behaviour exemplifies it. Shri Mooji says blessed is he whose very presence is the evidence of truth.

Some stories illustrate the Sthitapradnya well: A letter criticising and cursing Ramana was given to Shri Ramana- he started to correct the grammatical errors in it, when someone brought it to his attention that the letter was speaking about him- His response is classic- “it’s about somebody called Ramana”, he said.

A young monk in the Ramakrishna Mission was told to leave and go to the Himalayas to atone for something he had not done. He had been wrongly accused. So, sad and despondent he went to the Senior monk who was lying on his death bed and told him. The senior monk took him close and said- ‘this is the best news, now you go and be with your God, alone none to disturb you’. The young monk left the room with a smile on his face and quickened his steps to contemplate the Lord. So, **it shows how the attitude alone changes the situation itself.**

Shloka 58

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ 58॥

When like a tortoise that draws in its limbs from all directions, he withdraws all his senses from the sense objects his mind becomes steady.

Swami Rama is truly unbeatable- his commentary on this Shloka indicates the power he had found within, the clarity of his experience and the depth of his understanding. I will try to explain what he says, for I feel we can never appreciate it on our own, the truth of what is indicated, and then suddenly it all falls in place. He says the senses never give us the true experience of the world, it is always incomplete for they are limited [this has been scientifically proved]. The field of sense impressions is clouded, it also deludes the mind and the senses forcibly pull the mind out of its centre and dissipate its energy. (A 20-30 gm tongue can pull a 100 Kg. man to the Pizza house!) Primarily, therefore, **it is imperative that the senses are controlled – pratyahar** one of the steps in ashtang yoga. Then to introvert the mind and make it one pointed, so that the inner realm can be discovered, which we do not even suspect exists. There are two ways: Consciousness develops the first when it goes from subtle to gross i.e., from mind to sensations and then to body identification, this he says is **evolution**, and then we go inwards, from gross to subtle and subtler aspects of our being, when we arrive at pure Consciousness again, this being **involution**. This journey cannot happen until all concepts are dissolved, and the mind is pure and empty. The wise one thus withdraws his mind from sense objects, even as the tortoise withdraws its limbs and takes cover under the shell, thus stabilising his mind in Self. The withdrawal of the senses, is a first step to meditative practice. (There are many excellent ways to achieve this, primary being breath awareness.) Without this withdrawal and meditative silence, the unknown part of life, cannot be revealed to the human being. **‘This is the glorious missing half which makes life complete and perfect’ he says!**

Ekknath points out how the media has conditioned the modern man, into becoming totally sense oriented, so much so that he finds himself incomplete without material objects. The first step is to rectify, by withdrawing from the movies, and media that we watch which end up exciting desire and stimulating the senses. We are bombarded with advertisements, both through the eye and

ear so one should withdraw, from the cacophony of modern music too. Then when we go to the book store, we should choose to read that which will enhance our spiritual yearning. Finally, learn to withdraw, when someone is being maligned or better still say something that is good about the person being maligned. If we are able to exercise restraint and withdraw the senses, they will come under control and then we shall be established in the state of wisdom.

It is a well-known scientific fact that the senses have a range beyond which we cannot appreciate the external world. This is so, or else, it would have been impossible for our brain to compute and make sense of the sense perceptions had the range not been a limited one; every species has a different range. This is not all, the human also has concepts and interpretations for e.g. some communities are vegetarian and some are not, the vegetarians find non vegetarian food obnoxious, and the non-vegetarians find vegetarian food insipid! This is only a very gross example, our every mood, every thought, every reaction, every sentiment, is coloured by conditioning. Mahatma Gandhi has said '*we do not experience the world as it is but the way we are.*' Unless we learn Pratyahara- withdrawal of our senses which is the fifth rung, in the ladder to Samadhi as taught by Patanjali, we cannot proceed. So, primarily we have to give up something to get something- unless we lift one of our feet off the ground we cannot walk. The problem lies in our fear of giving up the known for a nebulous unknown. We tend to depend on our wealth and relatives in times of despair, little realising none can help us at the moment of death.

Here a story comes to mind which has been told by Swami Rama elsewhere. There once was a king who had four wives. He loved the 4th the best, and took great care of her. There came a time when he lay on his death bed and felt lonely, so he asked her, whether she would accompany him in death- she refused point blank; he was disappointed, but asked his 2nd wife who he loved almost equally she also refused, but promised to make him comfortable in life. He then asked the third wife, whom he did care for in much the same way - she said she would come with him till the funeral pyre, but not further. Finally, he asked his first wife, who he hardly noticed existed, and for the most part had neglected and she said, she would most certainly accompany him even in death. These four wives were: the most beloved was the body and its youth,

the second was his wealth, the third his near and dear ones, and the first whom he had neglected for the most part- his karma. If only we understood this from the beginning, we would withdraw our senses and start the inward journey well in time to discover the glorious light within! For which we need to give up attachment, to this object world. This requires exceptional courage - 'the bird of victory perches on the shoulder of the one who dares.' Paul Brunton. If we learn to withdraw our senses and gain control, we can be their Master rather than their slave.

Shloka 59

विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।

रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥ 59॥

Sense objects turn away from him, who does not enjoy them with his senses but the taste for them persists. This relish also disappears in the case of the man of stable mind when he realises the Supreme.

The inherent nature of the senses is to turn outwards and contact their objects. The power they wield out of the force of habit is tremendous and often quite subtle - one may not even recognise it. The senses cannot be curbed merely by preventing their contact with their objects. For if a man fasts for prolonged periods- his mind will conjure up food in myriad forms. It is more difficult to control the senses in that manner and in fact the effort may be counterproductive. Of all the senses, the sense of taste is the most difficult to overcome and unless one has tasted the joy of the Supreme, it is almost impossible. Swami Rama further goes on to say Brahman cannot be attained without total control over the senses and this cannot be achieved without the taste of Brahman. (Shirin -so catch 22!)

Patanjali who has given 8 steps to Samadhi the step towards meditation is Dharana which is focussing the mind on a single object. [generally considered steps but the literal translation is *limbs* for they have to be practised simultaneously and continuously, however samadhi will not ensue without the preceding 7 hence called steps.] Much like if you take your dog, to the supermarket and tie him outside, telling him you will be back in a short while. He waits and then gets up looks around, and if you are not seen stands against the glass peering, then barks a bit runs round for a while, but then sits down waiting patiently. The mind is much like the dog, restless and initially peering

to see what is coming in or going out, and finally settling down. Like that when we exercise external restraint on food, on what we watch, or hear- although we may be physically observing abstinence of these objects- mental hankering remains for a while.

When however, we catch a glimpse of the beauty of the Lord, and experience His presence, there is no more longing and that is the day of deliverance- then one can move about without fear, for then, no restraint will be necessary. When Sri Krishna says the relish also disappears **only** once the supreme is experienced, it gave me an exit route for being unable to control my senses! Convenient forgetfulness, is one of ego's special powers. Here he is describing the Sthita Prajnya, who having had a glimpse of the Supreme is no longer attracted to the sense objects for the pleasure they bring, pales in comparison with the bliss of the touch of the Supreme.

Shloka 62

ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।

सङ्गात्सञ्जायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥ 62॥

The man dwelling on sense objects develops attachment for them for attachment springs desire and from desire (unfulfilled) ensues anger.

Shloka 63

क्रोधादभवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।

स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥ 63॥

From anger arises delusion from delusion confusion of memory from confusion of memory loss of reason and from loss of reason one goes to complete ruin.

The lack of gratification of desire leads to frustration and anger. 'A fool cannot get angry the wise person does not'- Swami Vivekanand.

This happens to those who constantly dwell on sense objects- leading to uncontrolled anger and frustration, with loss of memory and the delusion of false justification. Desire for an object and not getting it, can lead to violence such that one may even kill another, in the wake of this imbalance. For example, two good friends may even kill each other if they fall in love with the same girl. Whereas two good friends after Self-realisation, will become even

thicker friends and pursue their goal with zeal and harmony. So, dwelling on sense objects leads to selfishness, and dwelling on Self-realisation, leads to selflessness. Selflessness is the characteristic of the one on the path to the Divine.

Dhyayato vishayan punsa- the first words of this shloka have guided many a sadhaka including Eknath, it means when you dwell on sense objects what follows is a given. Remembering this in the nick of time will save you from many a disaster. Today, there is no section where Eros has not made it his homestead, flaunting physical attributes is the major attraction. This happens due to the conviction that one is merely the body. Old classics had also a way of expressing love and romance which was done, as only a subtle suggestion. What Sri Krishna warns is, then, attachment and eventual ruin due to anger, delusion and loss of memory, are sure to follow. The vicious circle begins the more we indulge in the senses, the less we get out of them the less we get out of them, the more we indulge in them.

The two shlokas are really a continuum. The whole secret of sadhana lies revealed in: dhyayato vishayanpunsa.. which means whatever the mind dwells on, it gets attached to, following which the cascade of events of desire, anger, loss of memory and reason and complete ruin, follow. Fear happens when we feel we can do nothing about it, and anger happens when one feels one can do something about it.

Now, the key is if the mind dwells on Shri Krishna- it develops attachment to Him then the desire for Him is so gripping that one cannot rest till one unites with the Beloved! So, just start with training the mind to dwell on Him alone.

Raiskhan of Vrindavan some say Kabir: has said:

प्रेम गली साँकरी वहा रहे न दोय। अगर "मै" हूँ तो तू नहीं। तू है तो "मै" नहीं।।

The lane of love is very narrow, there no two can be, if I be there you are not
if you be there I am not.

"आईना साफ किया तो मै नज़र आया।"मै" साफ किया तो खुदा नजर आया।।

Mirror cleaned "I" seen, "I" cleaned "God" seen.

Shloka 64

रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।

आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥ 64॥

But the self-controlled sadhaka, while enjoying the various sense objects through his senses, which are disciplined and free from likes and dislikes attains placidity of mind.

What helps the sadhaka most is samyama- self-discipline. If one does not have self-discipline, he gets distracted and his energies are dissipated. His mind can never be one pointed and the goal shall ever elude him. The modern man while bathing in material waters also desires to make spiritual progress. This is not possible. They even dislike the word self-discipline as it is interpreted as some sort of punishment, and they are always looking for short cuts. The one whose mind does not practice self-discipline- cannot become one pointed- cannot develop his will to do sadhana and cannot therefore have any courage or become fearless. This is the sequence which follow from lack of self-discipline. Each and every faculty thought, word and deed, should be directed towards the goal. The way one desires one should think the way one thinks, one should act, otherwise a serious division arises within.

The very first thing Eknath says we have to get over is, our likes and dislikes, this we can practise by doing what our partner, children, friends want rather than what we want. In the monastic order this art is practised to perfection- the one who loves books is sent to tend the garden and vice - versa. Although quite difficult at first, it results in so much harmony and freedom. One sees that those who bend their will to suit ours, can stand firm as a rock in our difficult times. This also gives us equanimity to welcome joy when it comes and face sorrow when it comes.

There is a word Viresha which attracts me a great deal- it means the Lord who has conquered the three worlds. It is also a name of Shiva. Only the One who has conquered his senses can actually truly enjoy them, for as the word indicates he is the Lord- the master- and the senses are his slaves. Thus, he never overindulges them, keeps them in their place and is never enslaved by them. They are given by Prakriti to be enjoyed, not to be ensnared by them.

Viresha has a calm mind which is filled with pleasantness and cheer. He is the stitapradnya Arjuna is asking about.

Shloka 67

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।
तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नावमिवाम्भसि ॥ 67॥

As the wind carries away a boat upon the waters, even so, of the senses moving among sense objects, the one to which the mind is attached, take away his discrimination.

The sharp intellect can discriminate between the real and unreal the fleeting and eternal, pleasure and happiness, so it is essential to have discrimination, this leads to right action with non- attachment. However, the senses are very powerful. Man is compared to a chariot where the horses are the senses, the mind is the reins, the charioteer is the intellect and seated in the chariot is the Self. If the intellect does not have the power of discrimination, the mind which is being pulled by the senses, gets distracted and the untrained horses lead one to disaster. Training the mind through a properly guided intellect will then result in trained horses who take you to your destination.

The one who responds to the seductive call of the advertisers, slogans and charms of the senses is in for disaster. The best place to start is to control the palate. It is important to eat healthy food and avoid toxic foods which ruin both the physical and mental health. Today, nutritionists are advocating a vegetarian diet for physical health. But when we are on the spiritual path and can appreciate the unity of life, compassion for animals will be our natural tendency.

The senses are a powerful force (like the Chinese) and can plunge even the intellect into addiction or indulgence like a strong wind can make a boat adrift. The 'carnal mind' as Shri Mooji calls it resists being turned within and intoxicates one with sense objects, in fact it is toxic. Therefore, great vigilance and discrimination, 24/7, is required if this wind is to be resisted.

Shloka 69

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।

यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥ 69॥

That which is night to all beings, in that state of divine knowledge and supreme bliss the God realised Yogi keeps awake, and that (ever changing transient worldly happiness) in which all beings keep awake is night to the Seer.

This verse contains unique wisdom. The entire cosmos is reverberating with a well-orchestrated music, the sadhaka hears this with his whole being. Of this the ignorant who is wholly occupied in the pursuit of pleasure is totally oblivious. In the calm and serene stillness of the night, the sadhaka is able to gather the blossoms of sadhana in samadhi. He knows how to use this most beautiful time. While he is asleep in the morning, which is filled with mundane pursuits and the cacophony, of ordinary human endeavours to find pleasure in objects. It is like trying to quench thirst by sucking on weeds, the wise man drinks directly from the lake. He is asleep to selfishness and allurements of pleasures, which undoubtedly give fleeting relief but can never quench the thirst which springs for perennial joy. The world of our ego is one of sense data and as long as we identify with the body, we shall be in sansar- constantly changing until the great change called death. This is day to us- to the mystic it is night for he is in the unchanging state. We do not see the world as it is but as we are. *We look at it through an extremely narrow ego slit. Sri Ramana Maharishi has said that the world is a hospital, and all are admitted for treatment and will remain here till they are cured!* Even the Buddha has said that we all suffer from the same devastating disease- Tanha -thirst of selfish desire, and so he gave us the eightfold path to recover. Once, the underlying unity is seen the entire world view changes and the mystic is awake to that.

To the sage this illusion of pleasure does not exist. It is as if he is asleep to their charms, just as the worldly man is asleep to the possibility of spiritual evolution. It is a manner of saying what happens to the truly awakened being, he no longer finds worldly pleasures attractive and is oblivious to them, while awake and in Brahmananda.

Shloka 70

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं
समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।
तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे
स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥ 70॥

As the waters of different rivers enter the ocean which though full on all sides remains undisturbed likewise, he in whom all enjoyments merge themselves without causing disturbance attains peace; not he who hankers after such enjoyments.

The first word is aapuryamanam- ever full. This is our nature and no outside object can ever fill it. We simply have to withdraw from the sensual world and rest within. The second word is achalprathisthtam- which means established in this ever fullness. Such a one is likened to the ocean which is not disturbed even if the river, Ganga, enters it in high flood during the monsoon. The last word is Kaam - which is sexual desire and one of the most difficult to overcome. It has several names and each is descriptive. The remedy is only one the name of Shiva- the destroyer of the God of Desire. Every time we curb or resist this desire, we gain victory and strengthen our will. Sex is closely connected with Kundalini, which is the evolutionary energy and when we learn to control it, our creative ability and capability, for selfless service is released.

This shloka conveys a very subtle meaning which struck a cord in me. All rivers finally enter the ocean, it is said that the river trembles just prior to meeting the ocean- this is so because she is afraid to lose her identity but then she takes the plunge and verily becomes the ocean. Man is also naturally afraid to lose this identity he has built over not only this, but many lifetimes and his hesitation is understandable. Yet he has no choice if his aim is to become Brahman. The Ocean is not one bit perturbed at the junction, when the river merges with it, in fact even the tremor of the river becomes silent in It. Such is the wonder of even the Shitapradnya-, who is not perturbed even in the slightest by worldly desires and attractions- in fact they too become peaceful when they meet him! Whereas this is not so with the one who is desirous of worldly pleasures- they agitate and become further agitated in him. Thus, screaming for more fuel to be added to the fire.

Shloka 71

विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान्पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।

निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥ 71॥

He who has given up all desires and moves free from attachment egoism and thirst for enjoyment attains peace.

In this verse the Lord gives us the key to attaining shanti - the peace that resolves all conflict, fulfils all desire and banishes all fear. We all suffer from an inner division between the heart and the mind- this is because of the ego. The chasm grows with disloyalty and self-will. It is healed by meditation- when practised regularly, with cheer and devotion- a day comes when the mind goes to sleep. This is described in the Buddhist tradition as the state of no mind- it is a condition directly and intuitively perceived without the help of senses or mind. Everywhere there is a soothing stillness, a silent splendour. Eknath lovingly adds that he is not good at conducting ceremonies such as funerals etc. but we could call him anytime for the funeral service of the ego- he would come immediately.

To be nispruha is to be untouched by craving. As explained by Patanjali - the happiness we feel on the fulfilment of a desire is not in the object, but in the subsiding of the agitation one felt prior to receiving the object. This lasts only as long as the next desire arises and then it will be a much bigger one. Nirmamo not mine, is the next characteristic given by Sri Krishna. Just as the 'i' is painful 'mine' can be even more so, to the extent that wars happen in defence of it. Finally, the description of Nirahankar without ego - self-will. Totally bereft of this monotonous, infernal, bore- me, always wanting to be the cynosure of attention. As a matter of fact, it is better to be in the background, like Laotze has said it is better to be a blade of grass than a pine tree for the grass can withstand any storm while the pine will be felled by it. Eknath says one of the nicest compliments he has received is "he is very much at home with himself" - when one is at home with himself, he is at home everywhere in the world, peace and love follow.

Shloka 72

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।

स्थित्वास्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥ 72॥

Arjuna, such is the state of the God realised soul having reached this state he overcomes delusion. And established in this state even at the last moment he attains Bhramic bliss.

The one who has attained perfect tranquillity and equipoise is like the infinite sky. Let there be innumerable tumultuous thundering clouds or rain his equilibrium, is not touched. He has mastered his mind and able to live in this world without delusion or dejection. He is above the pairs of opposites. The sadhaka who is free from I-ness and my-ness, performs his duties skilfully and joyfully. He lives as though he is a guest, without the desire to possess for he knows nothing belongs to him, he does not disturb others and he does not get disturbed. He behaves like a traveller and so carries no burden- unlike the one who is forever clamouring to acquire and then is afraid he might lose what he has. A sadhaka who has attained equilibrium is un-swayed even in the face of death - it holds no fear for him. He knows it is a sweet lullaby of Nature which takes him onward to Divinity.

When the ego is dead, we come into eternal life. The wrong identification with the body, mind senses has come to an end experientially, and the Truth of who we are is known. The separate finite ego is dead and boundary annihilated- this is Nirvana. In samadhi the past vanishes, the future vanishes and one lives completely on the pinpoint of the moment. Here Eknath describes the passing of his grandmother - his spiritual Guru whose last words were "I have caught Rama by his feet." He tells the story of Shri Rama who while wandering in south India came to a place where no water was available and Sita was thirsty. Shri Rama sent an arrow deep into the earth from where a spring arose, it is said the water from the Ganga flows there. To mark this place two feet of Shri Rama have been placed. It was here that Eknath's spiritual Guru, his grandmother, went every morning for a bath and prayed.

The one who has so attained passes through life, without hanker- no more craving no more aversion- as people come close to him their questions get answered, their agitation subsides and they feel peaceful. Whenever I told Goenkaji that he cannot deny the value of Darshan and proximity to the Guru - he always asked "kab tak AC main baithi rahogi?" [how long will you sit near an AC] I had no answer to that. Swayam ko AC banaana hoga [you will have to

become an AC yourself.]. Finally, he sanctifies all that is associated with him and merges with the divine when he leaves this body. Even the place where he lived or walked is pervaded with a divinity, felt for thousands of years by those who visit it.

Summary: To summarise, the first 10 shlokas talk of Arjuna's condition and surrender to Shri Krishna. Shlokas 11 to 38 Shri Krishna explains the concept of the True Self, an answer to the question 'Who am I?' which is like the centre of the circle when one uses a compass to draw it. Then shlokas 39 to 52 Shri Krishna explains Buddhi Yoga- Karma Yoga and finally to the state of the Self realised Being as well as the practices that would take us there from shlokas 55 to 72.

Keywords:

1.Karpanya dosha - 7, 49. In summary- the one who comes with the wealth of the Self and is unable to experience and manifest It, is Krupana, in Chapter 15 shloka11 the word Akruta also signifies, the one who is not realised, does not know Me, says Shri Krishna. If we do not strive for Self-realisation and get somewhat satisfied with these small joys, being far inferior we are krupana. So, the take home message is, whenever we are attracted to these small pleasures, we should withdraw our mind and become Antarmukhi [inward facing] from Bahirmukhi [outward facing] and ask will this lead me to Self-realisation? Then let go, of the clinging and change direction, let the mind not be occupied with thoughts, that lead us nowhere- in fact, they do lead us away.

2. Gatasunagatssuncha sh.11 This is what describes the breath- it comes and it goes, therefore concentrate on this breath that comes and that goes, comes and goes, to reach the conviction that indeed such is life pleasures and pain, come and go come and go- what is there to hold onto? Therefore, do not crave for them and do not have aversion either.

3.Titiksha sh. 14 The definition is as given above, I found our dear Rashmi exemplified Titiksha, during her cardiac surgery which was the evidence of practical application of our learning. Not so easy, when it comes to our own body and when one undergoes such a serious surgery. Not only in the immediate postoperative period, but over the next 15-20 days as she struggled

through complications, she maintained her stoicism and humorously remarked- “Mein Shri Krishna se keh rahee hun, mein to witness mode hun, lekin tu kyu witness mode mein chala gaya? Kuch kaam dhaam kar!” [“I am in witness mode but Shri Krishna, why have you gone into one, do some work!”] And sure enough, she got her out of the hospital and she is recovering well. Titiksha on the level of thought, word or in action.

4.Sat-asat sh16, Swami Sarvapriyanand has given an entire lecture on this shloka, and he says the whole of the BG is based on it. It is worth keeping in mind that not only that which is seen and perceived but even that which is not seen and perceived – like light and shade, they are both together, but the truth is beyond both, like there is matter and antimatter but the Truth is not limited by either. There is both good and evil, but we have to go beyond both good and bad karmas.

5. Vasaunsi jirnani Sh.22 If you want to experience this world again you will, by simply changing your body, when one is worn out. The Lord does not force you to realise the Self, not even the Guru can enter your domain, that is where your own Divinity comes into play and hence you are a Lord unto yourself.

6. Akirtimaranaaditi sh.34 This is of great practical value for all career-oriented people especially doctors, for truly if one loses one’s reputation, it is worse than death. So be very careful to guard your reputation, especially if you are enjoying popular esteem. Therefore, do not do what may bring infamy on you and as sometimes happens if you are wrongly accused, do not be perturbed life has a way to sort itself out.

7. Buddhiyoga sh. 39 Surrender the fruit of action and not be attached to either the action or inaction. The intellect has to be convinced that ‘I’ is not the doer. Consciousness is like the sun, Shri Krishna says in chapter 7 like Aditya- as soon as it appears the whole of manifestation is lit, similarly it is the Atma which illumines the antahkaran, and the whole of Prakruti is perceived. Once the intellect is convinced that the source is within and That is who one is, the attraction for praise, the aversion for blame all drops off quite easily. Such a yoga- union- of the Buddhi with the Atman is what we need to aspire to and we can achieve by following this path. We have this false assumption that it is the

spouse, children, house, etc. etc. which give us an identity, which we then cling on to, for dear life; it is indeed this, that brings us strife and fear. The whole Truth is the opposite; it is I the Atman that illumines this world. The mirror is the mind and therefore the image is construed to be the Truth. It is after all an upside-down reflection alone. Karma yogis are highly intelligent for they have to be profoundly convinced about the Truth. Which is the kind of Buddhi which has the capacity to be convinced, about who is the doer? Only that Buddhi which is pure without modifications, aversions, cravings. This can be achieved by surrender of the fruits of action and thereby the proper practice of Karmayoga can happen.

8. Traigunya sh. 45 It is the Prakruti which comprises of the three Gunas- Sattva Rajos and Tamo Guna. It is with these Gunas, that the Antahkaran and all of manifestation, is made and it depends on the predominance of one or other guna, that leads to a particular action to be performed. One has to go beyond the Gunas to be able to be in the witness mode, so that we can notice how the mind is reacting – even the post event does not matter, one develops the capacity to witness one's thought, word and action as a saakshi [witness]. A certain discernment develops and one becomes capable of dissociating from the mind made of the Gunas, and reach the true witness or Awareness.

9.Yogakshema- This word comes in the same shloka[45] and it signifies that if our only pursuit is that of love for Shri Krishna- Self-realisation, then it is Shri Krishna's responsibility to take care of what you have and get for you what you do not have, That is why it is the motto of the Life Insurance policy in India. In the context of the shloka this applies to both our material needs and spiritual aspirations.

10. Karmanyevadhikaraste- 47 The key concept of Karmayoga. Not to be attached to inaction and to surrender the fruit of action, for that can never be controlled. The outcome of any action cannot be guaranteed, this is so because of other variables in an action which are all possibilities and not an integral part of the action. To be able to compute the outcome is not certain, at best it may be a guesstimate. Therefore, when one surrenders the fruit of action, knowing full well that we have no right over it, we experience immediate freedom and can enjoy the action, and if using our Buddhi, we combine it with the attitude

of “welfare of all,” there is not only no anxiety about the outcome there is pure joy in the doing too. Further to this if the I, me, and mine is removed the action automatically becomes skilful and verily a meditation in action. Even while watching a game if we do not have a “my team”, “must win” attached we not only appreciate the game better but also the skill of players unbiased with the need to win [eg.IPL].

11. Mohakalilam sh. 52 Yada te Mohakalilam- the delusion of being the doer, Karta and Bhokta- experiencer. Every time one is distressed- just ask yourself are you mohit? Are you deluded? What is the misery? That we are deluded by Prakruti. The one who has gone beyond Mohakalila, this mire of duality [maaya- object/subject] such as pain and pleasure, gain and loss, heat and cold, these being the building blocks of sansar, attains. So, the practise is to become aware of the fact that delusion is overpowering the Buddhi when misery is experienced. It is like a wake-up call each time – ‘I am experiencing misery because I am deluded.’ The Gunas are at work, get back to the witness mode. And you can get to the next word-

12. Shitapradnya – 54 The one whose pradnya – wisdom is established in the Truth. The three reasons for the sthitapradnya’s happiness are: From the text Panchadashi:

- Kruta krutyah -Done, all that one could imagine, is done*
- Gynan gyanatavyah- Knows, what needs to be known.*
- Prapta praptavyah - Has attained, what has to be attained- the greatest of sorrows cannot shake you.*

13 Vigatspruh Shloka 56- The one who is free or clear of desires. It is easier to aspire for liberation when in unhappiness or misery than when in mundane happiness. One can rest one’s head on a friend’s shoulder, or one may attend satsang and look within for the causes of misery when distressed, but to be non – attached to the sukha [happiness] of the mundane world seems more difficult. So, the one who is free from the fulfilment of desires, of this world, is sukheshu vigatspruh. The desire for God liberates you from worldly desires, he knows this and thus applies it every time he feels attracted to the fleeting happiness of this mundane world which is the seed of misery.

14. Veetaraga sh. 56 Veeta raag- that which is beyond both attachment and detachment and is therefore termed non-attachment. Osho explains it well he says- Raag means attachment, Virag means detachment and Veetraag means beyond both. He tells the story of Kamaal the son of the great saint Kabir. The saint Kabir as is well known was detached from all the objects of sansar and when people brought him gifts, he promptly returned them saying he had no use of them. Kamaal a saint in his own right accepted them and was therefore asked to leave and have a hut of his own. When asked why he accepted these objects his simple explanation was that people brought them with some sentiment which ought to be respected and more so to lighten the burden of Karma they were carrying. Once it so happened that a King came with the most precious diamond and offered it to Kamaal. He was told to leave the stone wherever he wished and leave. So, the king explained this was no ordinary stone but a valuable diamond. Kamaal replied it was all the same to him. To test Kamaal, the King hid it in the roof of the hut, and when he returned after six months, he asked Kamaal where was the stone? Kamaal said it must be where he had left it and true enough it was exactly in the same place, in the roof of the hut. To Kamaal a stone or diamond were equal – which is what Shri Krishna will tell us in Chapter 6 shloka 8- Samaloshtashchakaanchan. He was beyond both attachment and detachment. Detachment, in a way could be termed as negative attachment i.e. attachment to being detached. This reminds me of what Nisargadatta Maharaj answered a visitor who remarked ‘Maharaj seems to be attached to smoking’ He replied, “And you seem to be attached to non-smoking.”

15. Samyamya, Vashe indriyani sh. 61 The key of the key words- samyam- ie. to maintain balance under all circumstances. The one, who has conquered his senses, alone can maintain balance. To control one’s senses does not mean to deny or decry, repress, or suppress them or overindulge them but to enjoy them in the right measure. Thus, one will not be a slave but a master of the senses. Controlling the senses will establish you in that state where balance of mind and clarity of thought will become your very nature.

16. Dhyayato vishayan sh.62- What one’s mind dwells on we get attached to. So, we have decided that we will direct our minds to dwell ONLY on Shiva-

Krishna or Consciousness so that we can avoid falling into that cascade of events which leads to loss of memory, delusion and destruction.

17. Prassannachetasa sh. 65- who has this tranquil mind? the one who has withdrawn his mind from these vishayas- objects and is established in the witness mode. Only when one has a prassannachitta, can he progress on the path of spiritual exploration which is our goal. A prassannachitta is an automatic response, when we stop running after sense objects. Because when we run after sense objects we are in a state of continuous lack, and a person who is in a constant state of lack, cannot have a prassannachitta which is the result of a contented mind. A proverb in Gujarati says- 'Santosh dhan nu mool' meaning contentment is the source of wealth. Wealth encloses wealth of money, fame, education, health.

18. Aapuryamanah sh. 70 The ocean does not change its level even when major rivers in spite of during monsoons, flow into it. The rivers themselves become calm when they meet the ocean, so also in the mind of the realised being any number of cravings may enter, but they do not make even the slightest impression. Not just this, they too find peace there and cravings cease to enter so as to be pacified, as they get so much peace. This does not happen in the one who craves- instead it sets his mind in a turmoil. The practice therefore is to watch the mind and when desire for a sense object appears just say- let it become calm, and after that even if the sense object appears there will be no agitation and that craving will find rest.

19. Brahmanirvanaam sh. 72 And now then after one has done all the above what will happen? We will attain Brahma Nirvana, even if at the end of this life, if we aspire and practice- the state of Brahmic Bliss – by letting go of all desires, confusions and doubts, Brahmic Bliss happens, for we know where to withdraw and into what we want to withdraw.

Thus, we have understood with the help of these key words, and the study of this chapter, what we need to do to attain BrahmaNirvana.

Reflection and Exercises:

1. What do you understand by 'titiksha' and where does it fit in our ladder towards the Self? What are its various levels?
2. What is your own understanding of Nishkama karma and give 3 examples of your having practiced it this week. Not from the past. It's a now question, are we practising it now?
3. Role of rituals in daily life. Their gross and subtle importance. Refer to shlokas 42-44 chapter 2.
4. Kindly explain the word *krupana* that appears in shloka 49 chapter 2 and find if it repeats in the Bhagavad Gita. Give 3 examples in your personal life when you behaved thus.
5. What do you understand by the term *Veeta raga*? Have you ever been able to practise it? Don't simply say 'No'. Try to practice and respond.
6. What are the key words of chapter 2 of the Bhagavad Gita?
7. Difference between *jnana yoga* and *karma yoga*
8. 3-5 lines only of the key practices in daily life that will help keep your mental equilibrium in every situation. Just enumerate as you personally would like to practice in order of importance
9. What is the true sign of surrender? Keep Arjuna in mind.
10. Does shloka 16 have any practical significance for you? Those who think it has, give points.
11. Summarize what you have understood from Shloka 12 to 17, Chapter 2.
12. What is *Atma*?
13. If you were Sri Krishna, how would you tell Arjuna not to grieve?
14. What is subtle body? Can you experience it?
15. In what way is the study of chapter 2 helped you practically? Please reflect and answer.
16. What is the matrix to reach self-realization?
17. Practice shloka 47 of chapter 2 and write one instance that truly exemplifies the same.
18. What is the *Phala Shruti* of practising shloka 47?
19. How can you spiritualize daily life?
20. Why does Shri Krishna refer to Karma Yoga as *Buddhi Yoga*?

21. *Elaborate on the word mohakalilam and practice being out of it giving one example, in your answer. Reflect carefully with the practical aspect and follow.*
22. *What are the lakshanas of a Sthitha pragna?*
23. *Complete sense control leads to enlightenment and unless enlightened, complete sense control cannot happen. What is the way out?*

*The reader is referred to the essay on **Sankhya yoga**, in the book of 'Essays on Ancient Wisdom.'*

Discourse 3 - Karma Yoga - The Yoga of Action

Shri Krishna primarily explains the nature of the Self and the means to know the Self through Jnyan [path of Nivritti] and Buddhi-Karmayoga [path of Pravritti] to Arjuna. This is followed by the exposition on who a Jnyani is, and how one can practice being free from the grip of ignorance. Just as Arjuna was getting out of his despondency and getting ready to fight, he is assailed by a doubt that if Jnana is the direct path to Nirvana, why was he being goaded to this gory act of war. Accordingly, he now asks Shri Krishna to explain the need for action when the goal of life is Nirvana, and this could be attained through jnana and surrender. Like a good student he does not blindly follow but would like to be convinced of his course of action. The unique bond that the two have of 'sakhas' i.e. friendship, he feels he is at liberty, to put such a confronting question to Shri Krishna. It is said that there are three types of friends- the mitra- who is an acquaintance and you wish him well, the bandhu who is like your brother and you share a close bond with him and finally the sakha- who is in resonance with your inner being. Shri Krishna is the Sakha of us all and our every thought or emotion is known to Him even prior to our own cognition of it.

We learn that it is the Gunas that act. The permutation and combination of Sattva, Rajas and Tamo gunas, force an action to happen. Even the wise and the sage are impelled by the same, the only difference being they know it. So, if the Gunas are at work even in the sage, what can control of the senses do? We are subject to two obstacles on the path- raga and Dvesha- if we can tackle these two, we can create a by-pass around the gunas!

This chapter is therefore titled Karma Yoga as now this is explained to Arjuna in detail, expounding the practical application and giving examples of King Janaka and Himself, who performed their duty in all earnest externally, while being totally 'nirlipta' -untouched within. Shri Krishna points out that indeed the basis of creation is Yajnya, i.e. an offering to the Ultimate and if every thought, word and deed, be offered as worship to the Lord, no Karma can accrue and one is liberated from the bondage of birth and death. Shri Krishna re-emphasizes Yajnya in the next chapter as well.

Selected verses are presented which highlight the concept, and practice of Karmayoga and their significance in daily life are outlined.

Shloka 1

अर्जुन उवाच ।

ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।

तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥ १॥

Arjuna said: Krishna, if You consider Knowledge as superior to Action, why then do You urge me to this dreadful action, Keshava!

Jyayasi- Better than Karma is Jnyan then why are you instigating me to this dreadful action? Seems a very logical question. The direct means of attaining Bliss- is namely Sankhya- through wisdom, and Arjuna therefore feels, why is Krishna [Keshava] commanding me to do action, which is fraught with many a tangible evil and which is but an indirect and uncertain means of attaining Bliss? Arjuna's question also points to his state of mind- confusion! In the next shloka Arjuna even states that his intellect is confused by this contradiction. This is so as the two paths need to be elaborated on, further, for clarity of understanding.

Swami Rama explains with such clarity that it is imperative to quote and summarise so that we may be inspired. Arjuna was explained in the second chapter that the Self is not subject to change, cannot be killed it is immortal and beyond any concepts and that he is the Self just as all the warriors arrayed before him. He was also explained the futility of attachment, to this temporal world which is ever changing and even with intense effort, can never be stabilised. This knowledge helped Arjuna out of the despondency into which he had fallen due to attachment, however, just theoretically knowing is not helpful and he, therefore, does not realise how to put it into practise. Although Bhagwan has also explained the path of action to him, he finds them contradictory and not complimentary which they actually are.

Swami Rama then goes on to say that there are two aspects of Spiritual practise. He says the Truth is first to be known and then attained. The difficulty encountered is lack of discipline and attachment to the physical realm. The one identified with Truth, is automatically non-attached and the one identified with the body is attached. ***For any action to be undertaken the thought or knowledge of it has to arise, which means it is subtly performed by the mind***

prior to its execution. Therefore, there is invisible inner action, prior to the visible outer action. So, mastery of the inner action is Jnana Yoga and mastery of outer action is Karma Yoga. Thus, the two paths are complimentary and without contradictions. This is not clear to Arjuna as he has only an intellectual understanding of Jnana, at this stage. Once it comes into his experience, no doubt or conflict will remain. Like a sincere and intelligent sadhaka, he does not blindly follow and wants his doubts cleared, so that he does not just understand intellectually. He wants to practise. The true Guru always encourages this questioning mind. The part of mind which is in doubt, is called Manas and that which is clear and decisive, is called Buddhi.

Eknath: says Janardan means 'one who stirs up the people' so Arjuna is asking Shri Krishna, for he is now stirred to know the Truth. Arjuna is confused and asking for clarification for if Jnyan [knowledge], is the straight way to realise the Self why was he being urged to act and that too to battle?

Shloka 3

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

लोकेऽस्मिन्द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मया नघ ।

ज्ञानयोगेन साङ्ख्यानं कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥ ३ ॥

Shri Bhagwan said: Arjuna, in this world two courses of sadhana (spiritual discipline) have been enunciated by Me in the past. In case of the Sankhyayogi, the Sadhana proceeds along the path of Knowledge: whereas in the case of the Karma yogi it proceeds along the path of Action.

As enunciated by Bhagwan there are two means of attaining Truth one through Knowledge and one through Action. It depends on one's temperament and firm conviction (Nishtha). When one has a more Rajasic nature and is given to activity the choice of the path would be Karma Yoga, or action [Pravritti marg] which is done skilfully, selflessly, with non- attachment to the fruit thereof. Swami Rama uses this term of Non- attachment for Vairagya, although, it is sometimes translated as indifference or detachment, it is not so. An act done with non-attachment is inspired, is done skilfully and in the interest of one and all. The one who is given to explore the inner world of consciousness, and is introverted should choose to walk the path of Knowledge or Jnyana [Nivritti

marg- this entails renunciation] for when practised with Nishtha, (firm conviction) is also sure to lead the aspirant to the goal. Here however he renounces, the objects of sensual pleasure, even his family and friends for he has only one desire to merge with the Absolute. Yet a warning is given for the Jnyana Yogi, that if he renounces only externally and not with the burning desire for truth, he will perish.

The same is not the case of the Karma yogi, he renounces nothing, only the fruit of his action and dedicates himself for the well-being of all. Jnana yoga is knowing full well, that all actions are a result of the gunas, be they of the body/sense/mind and with no sense of **doership**, and being one with Satchidanand- Paramanaada, is called sankhya, sanyasa or Jnyana yoga.

Shloka 5

न हि कश्चित्क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।

कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥ 5 ॥

Surely, none can ever remain inactive even for a moment; for, everyone is helplessly driven to action by modes of Prakruti (nature born qualified sattva, rajas and tamas).

In order to further clarify the difficulties of Jnana Yoga, Shri Krishna now explicitly shows Arjuna, that no one is bereft of action even the one who is practising stillness, is still breathing, sleeping and sitting etc. for such is the law of nature. So, by giving up action that you have been trained to do, you will not be absolved of action per se. It is therefore better to do action which you can perform skilfully, with non-attachment and selflessly.

It is actually the Gunas -Sattva, Rajas and Tamas in various permutations and combinations and proportions, that form the structure of action, the Ego is under the illusion that it chooses the action. It usurps the position of doer and appropriates the praise and blame for the same to himself thereby karma follows him like a shadow.

Shloka 6

कर्मन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।

इन्द्रियार्थान्विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥ 6 ॥

He who outwardly restraining the organs of sense and action, sits mentally dwelling on the objects of senses, that man of deluded intellect is called a hypocrite.

Swami Rama explains that outward renunciation of family, possessions and creature comforts is not enough. The path of renunciation is austere and only a very few can take to it. During and immediately after the time of the Buddha many men and women renounced worldly life and took to begging for sustenance. Some, of course were genuine, as they experienced the ephemeral nature of life and felt they better give their entire attention to the search for truth. Most however, were charlatans and craved the comforts and luxuries of life inwardly, this Shri Krishna says is being a hypocrite. It is better to do one's duty sincerely and selflessly, surrendering the fruit of that action at the feet of the Guru or God, than to be a renunciate craving material comforts. The path of action is far easier and more appropriate, for the householder and those actively involved in public life.

My own feeling is renunciation, even while desiring the object one has renounced, leads to some degree of self-control and increases the sankalp shakti (power to complete a resolve). It is therefore necessary, while not renouncing worldly life totally, one should desist from indulging in one's favourite food or taking some resolve and completing it so that one develops self-control. This of course is not the same as taking to the path of the mendicant. It also serves to remind us of the greater goal that of surrender of the fruit of action and selfless action. One could use it to remind oneself every time one desired the object 'did I do my actions selflessly today?

Shloka 7

**यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।
कर्मन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते ॥ ७॥**

On the other hand, he who controlling the organs of sense and action by the power of his will and remaining unattached undertakes the Yoga of selfless action through those organs Arjuna, he excels.

Shri Krishna is explaining to Arjuna the method of action, not coveting the outcome doing the action for the sake of the well-being of all, leads to success in sadhana.

Swami Rama describes three types of action: 1. Action done totally for oneself eg. brushing the teeth, eating, ablutions, etc. 2. Action done in the context of relationships, sharing with others such action as cooking, working in an office, playing games etc. 3. Action done only towards 'self-realisation,' it is this higher type of action in which we are asked to surrender the fruit of action at the feet of Shri Krishna.

There are four types of Karma according to Purva Mimaunsa:

- **Nitya**- Obligatory- **Panchamahayajnyas**- are – Brahma yajnya- study and teaching of scriptures, Deva yajnya – worship God, Pitru yajnya- sacrifice for ancestors, Nri [atithi] yajnya- guest who comes to you, Bhut Yagnya- all five elements, and animals and plants.
- **Naimiittika**- rituals naamkaran, marriage, shraadhha.
- **Kamya**- action done through desire for some object or for personal advantage
- **Nishiddha** forbidden action such as any unethical or criminal act

The message of the Bhagvad Geeta is not to shirk one's duty, and to do it skilfully with full attention, while not craving for the fruit of the action. This can be achieved it is not impractical, if we bear in mind the good of all and not only of our narrow self. This will ensure enthusiastic action, which will clear our path to Self-recognition and perennial joy.

Sh. 9-16: 9: secret of the way to do action – as a yajnya without attachment. Act in a dharmic, ethical way – bad for both society and oneself **if not followed** along with the karmic effects later. If, Preyas [that which is pleasurable] is pursued in an ethical manner it is acceptable, but it does not bring lasting fulfilment. Only if action is done without attachment – Shreyas, will it lead to freedom. Accept the result as Krishna prasad, it cannot be chosen. Sometimes one gets prasad one quite dislikes – it has to be accepted!! Cooking, driving, work, all can be made into a Puja [worship], so that whatever comes out of that is prasad. Ishta -Kamadhuk- the bestower of all wishes.

10: In Vedic times the gods are propitiated, and the gods bless and grant desires- worldly and other worldly [accepted on faith- a promissory note!] Make work into a ritual. Consider life itself as yajnya [fire sacrifice]. Mutual accordance, Eco consideration. We are part of the Earth, we should not

damage it. We should take care of all the gods- Varun, Agni Devata-global warming, and Dharti Mataa[mother Earth], or else, Nature and you both suffer.
11: Worship the gods and they will sustain you. Sustain Nature and Nature will sustain you.

12: Thief – one who does not offer what one receives. – the one who exploits Nature without giving back to Nature is a thief.

13: Those take prasada and act with the feeling of service- are released from karma but the one who cooks only for himself- eats only sin.

14: Food arises [sambhava] from crops, the crops come from rain – perform all actions as yajnya.[offering]

15: All actions -rituals are given in the Vedas and the Vedas come from God. Live knowing this

16: This cycle which has been set into motion by Me, the one who does not see himself as that, and falls prey to sense pleasures- worthless is his life, he lives in vain because, even worldly goal will not be attained, nor will spiritual progress be attained.

Shloka 17

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।

आत्मन्येव च सन्तुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥ 17 ॥

He, however, who takes delight in the Self alone and is gratified with the Self, and is contented in the Self, has no duty.

Shloka 18

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।

न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥ 18 ॥

In this world that great soul has nothing to gain by action, nor by abstaining from action; nor has he selfish dependence of any kind on any creature.

Taking both shlokas together:

For the one who has realised the Self both, action or inaction are the same, for he has no self-interest meaning selfish interest. He no longer identifies with the body, thus he is not after territorial security or any other form of self-preservation. The four fountains of existence- aahar- food, Nidra- sleep, Bhaya- fear, Maithuna- procreation are common to the animal world and man. It is only his ability to be conscious of the Self, that makes Man the most evolved

being in creation. The great soul, who has realised this Truth of his Self, is pure awareness and as such doing or not doing, do not apply to him. He rests in his majestic stillness with no craving or aversion and thus performance or abstinence from duty is irrelevant in his case. He is totally content lacking nothing.

Krutakrutya- done what needs to be done

Jnyatavya jnyatatya- known what needs to be known

Praptavyaprapta- attained what needs to be attained

Four types of people; Jijivisha one who wants to live /jigyasa curious for knowledge /bhubhuksha one after sensual experiences and Mumukhsa one keen to attain the Truth.

In summary the Karma yoga principles are:

1. Action without expecting fruit- karmaphala tyaga
2. Action without attachment -asanga – e.g. Sun shines on all without discrimination and remains unsullied. [act, give and remain unattached]
3. As a yajnya – chakra set in motion- environment and man.
4. Action with care – samgrah [apne liye mut chaho, apna mut samjho, apne liye mut karo]
5. As a means for chitta shuddhi purification of mind.
6. Proper role model
7. Protect the masses
8. Arpana vrutti attitude of surrender
9. Prasad buddhi
10. Samashti [all] first, then Vyashti [self]
11. Meant for the ignorant, not for the Self realised for his is action in inaction and inaction in action.
12. Avoids being a mithyachaari.
13. Parasparo devo bhava- is what one can give back to Ishwara, consider each other as God, embodied.
14. Transforming routine action into a spiritual practice.
15. Do not unsettle the masses- average person's attitude if ethical and dharmic.
16. Swadharma-duty according to your station in life.

17. Buddhiyoga – buddhi essential for karmayoga
18. Without Raag/Dvesha-samatvam [equanimity] which is a result of not expecting karmaphala.

Shloka 20 /21

**कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः ।
लोकसंग्रहमेवापि सम्पश्यन्कर्तुमर्हसि ॥ 20 ॥
यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥ 21 ॥**

It is through action without attachment alone that Janaka and other wise men reached perfection. Having in view the maintenance of the world order too, you should take to action.20

For, whatever a great man does, that very thing other men also do; whatever standard he sets up, the generality of men follow the same.21

King Janaka performed his duties as an Emperor, while being totally non-attached as he had only the wellbeing of others at heart and desired nothing for himself. He is cited as an example of ultimate equanimity, achieved by one who is awareness itself.

While performing any role the actor, even when he totally identifies with the role and does a great job, knows that he is not the role! Imagine if Karma would accrue to a murderer in a movie! Thus, no Karma can ever accrue to such a one who has dissociated with the limited identity. To achieve this clear understanding the easiest method, as propounded by Bhagwan Shri Krishna, is to relinquish the fruit of action which then cuts asunder the vicious circle of Karma, fruit, more karma! As one who does action for the sake of fame for example and gets it, gets addicted to that sensation, of being applauded and repeats further karma, with the hope of a similar result. Yet one can perform the role surrendering the fruit of action, observing internally our sensations and developing a space, that is actually liberating then, no Karma can ever accrue. When one learns this trick, it is addictive, and it becomes a source of perennial joy, with no dependence on any external factor.

It is a well-known fact that in life we have role models and icons. If our role model suddenly renounces and walks away into the forest, it would lead to total chaos amongst the masses. They would be confused and lost. It is therefore necessary for Arjuna, to continue to do his duty for otherwise he would be the cause of much confusion in his country. Everyone looked up to him as a great warrior, he only had to continue to perform his duty without attachment and then no 'karma' would accrue to him. Accordingly, he would also lead his people on the right path.

Kindly recall Arjuna's lamenting, that he would be responsible for utter destruction of society by warring.

Shri Krishna has given the example of King Janaka and then he also gives his own example, saying he has nothing whatsoever to attain in all the three worlds, but in spite of it all, He acts for if He did not, the whole populace would go to ruin. It is essential that we perform our duty for the sake of the well-being of all. This we have seen is in itself the most significant sign of a Self-realised being. Their work is an expression of their compassion and wisdom.

In daily life we see that in a family, the children learn the words most frequently used by their parents, they act as per what they see done, not what is preached to them. In childhood they idolise their parents, and it is vital that right values are instilled to ensure that the young move in the right direction. Otherwise in this world of bombardment by media and peer pressure it is very easy to go, from desire to desire, without any fulfilment and all one ends up having is restlessness.

Suppose, on the other hand, you, or suppose (for that matter) any other man, thinks that he has achieved his ends and has realised the Self, even he should work for the welfare of others, though for himself he may have nothing to do. The behaviour of an enlightened person, which is natural and spontaneous should be emulated by the ignorant- one cannot cop out of the responsibility saying, 'O I am enlightened so I need not do.' - Swami Dayanand.

Shloka 25

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥ 25 ॥

Arjuna as the unwise act with attachment so should the wise man with a view to maintain the world order act without attachment.

Shloka 26

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् ।

जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन् ॥ 26 ॥

The wise man established in the Self should not unsettle the mind of the ignorant attached to action but should get them to perform all their duties duly performing his own duties.

Joshayet- inspire.

As is usual in the mundane world we indulge in making plans with goals in view and expect results. Every corporate operation is with a view to achieve a target and surpass past performance; incentives are given to improve production and marketing. It would be unwise to call this action unwise! However, in the context of the Bhagwat Gita what Shri Krishna says is improve the quality of the product and have the general good as your goal and all balance is achieved. It is difficult to even imagine, that we put the general good first, and not our personal gain, for this is the way our mind has been conditioned. The goals we are taught to have, are always personal goals right from KG class you must come first in studies, in sports and in arts; does not matter if your best friend fails you have no time to help him, after all you have to study. This reminds me of the beautiful song, in which two little boys are playing with their toy horses and the horse of one boy breaks, the other boy says, “do you think I would leave you crying when my horse has space for two?” It so happens that they are both in the army and in the cavalry during the war, the second boy’s horse is killed and he is left stranded. Quickly the first boy pulls him on to his horse and charges away saying, “do you think I would leave you dying when my horse has space for two?” Sri Krishna gently tells us put the thought of the other first, *forget the reward for that is a given*. The wise act in a selfless manner, and in the long run they succeed in achieving results far superior, to the self-oriented goals of the unwise people, who act only to improve their own conditions and amass wealth for themselves and their progeny at the cost of the labourer and society at large.

The truly wise are not attached to either action or inaction as explained earlier, and no karma accrues to them but if they choose to act e.g. like Shri Krishna Himself, they bring about total wellbeing, almost spontaneously, without any attachment to the result. They are therefore never perturbed, even in the face of failure, loss or sorrow. Their equilibrium is not lost.

The wise never abruptly change course or introduce ideas which may create disturbance in the minds of the followers. They never expect people to leave their duties, instead they guide them to love their duties and do them skilfully, this itself is a great sadhana and can lead us to freedom. They inspire them to excel and set more and more ideal goals before them, such that their mind eventually turns within.

Swami T- This whole chapter is all about doing better than normal behaviour and transforming a routine karma into a spiritual practice.

Shankara: An ignorant man who is attached to action believes "I should do this action and enjoy its result." No wise man should unsettle that firm belief. — What then should he do ? Himself doing diligently and well the actions which the ignorant have to do, he should make them do those actions.
In what way is an ignorant man attached to actions? Listen:

Shloka 27

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।

अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥ 27 ॥

In fact all actions being performed by the modes of Prakruti [Primordial Nature]. The fool, whose mind is deluded by egoism, thinks; "I am the doer".

As explained by Eknath that which is changing is termed Prakruti so everything that changes, that is all manifestation, is Prakruti and thus the body, mind and breath are all Prakruti. That which dwells within is Purusha and that is what we are, pure consciousness which records all that is changing. If there was only that which was changing, how would one compute it?

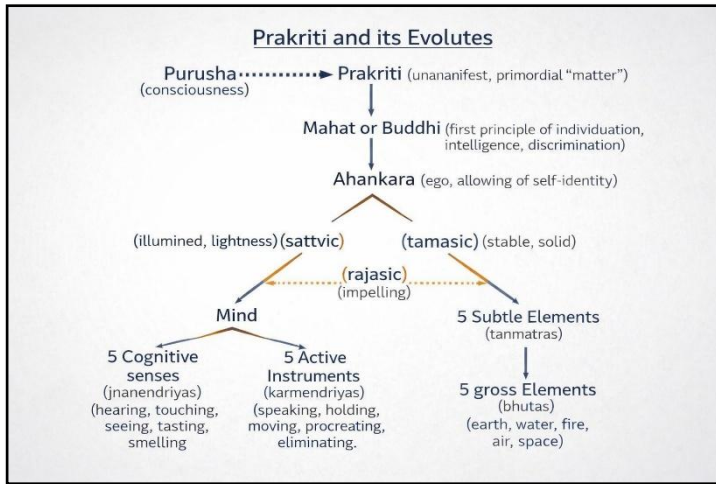
There are three Gunas - Sattva, Rajas and Tamas meaning these are the constituents of Prakruti which are present in various permutations and

combinations in every element and create an appearance which is constantly changing. Sattva is the quality of law, of goodness and closest to realising the self, Rajas is energy, movement and desire, Tamas is inertia, lethargy and indolence the opposite of any spiritual aspiration. No one is completely bereft of one or the other Guna, they are in different proportions and different in prominence, at different times and situations. So, we cannot condemn or totally praise, anyone, who is in manifestation or Prakruti.

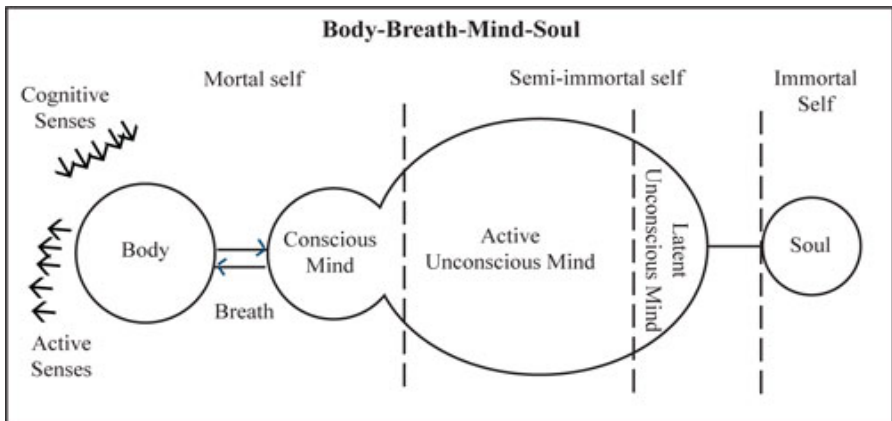
Shri Krishna is telling us it is this combination which acts and it is a deluded Ego which feels “i do”, “i do.” This means that we create an image of a doer, thinker and experienter, and then believe that it acts. However, it is only the conditioning and the proportion of these Gunas that act and react, in a vicious circle until we learn to live deliberately, i.e. consciously, and identify with the Self and simply, *use* the Ego to transact in the mundane world. This would ensure being above and beyond, the pairs of opposites- pain and pleasure/ sorrow and joy/ gain and loss and so on. To explain further and clarify the point, it is necessary to reflect on what performs action. The body, senses, mind are all a part of Prakruti, and these are illumined by the light of Consciousness-Purusha. The Purusha needs this instrument to experience manifestation. The energised instrument is so perfectly in tune, with the manifest world that it hypnotises the Consciousness, and the belief ‘I am the Body-Mind Ego’ takes hold of it, this entity is then known as the Jiva. This is the beginning of sansar, karma accrues to this pseudo entity, and it rolls on from desire to desire, life to life. Swami Vivekanand has said “Beware do not desire” when asked ‘why?’ he replies, “For it will be fulfilled.”

The Prakruti is the instrument that is performing the action and the immutable, timeless, indestructible Self is energising it. It’s up to us what we want to identify with. A time comes when the hypnosis wares off and through the guidance of the Guru, we are set free from the strangle hold of Prakruti, which had entangled the Purusha.

Prakruti according to Sankhya philosophy comprises of the following:



24 parts- tatvas - 5 elements [-pruthvi aap tej vaayu akaash- with their characteristics - gandha, ras, roop, sparsh, shabda] 5 cognitive [jnyanendriyas] senses and their 5 objects, then 5 organs of action [Karmendriyas]- speech, grasp, walk, generative, excretion. – [called vaach, paani, paada, paayu and Upastha in Sanskrut] and the *inner instrument or Antahkarana*- mana- mind, Budhi- intellect, Chitta- memory, ahankara-ego. = 24



This is the schematic diagram Swami Rama designed to explain lucidly what is the Self-Purusha [immortal Self], all that precedes it is in the realm of Prakruti, and the three Gunas Sattva, Rajas, and tamas. When all the three Gunas are in equilibrium there is no creation e.g. deep sleep. Any imbalance results in manifestation. Stephen Hawking has said much the same thing in the book Brief history of time where he gives the scientific view of the beginning of the Universe. He says it was due to the imperfection, in the cooling of gases after the Big Bang that stars and supernovas, started to form. He also jokes 'that the next time you notice an imperfection in your spouse- be grateful it is because of the imperfection that he/she exists!'

All of this would be as naught but for the Consciousness, that pervades It, the true Observer of this manifestation – observation does not exist without an observer is a scientific fact, as well. An example might illustrate this well- when we watch Television, we see pictures keep coming and going on a screen, the pictures are not the screen and yet without the screen they could never be seen, what is more, all that is projected is illumined by it. Now who projects? This mind projects its desires, conditionings, likes and dislikes which it has accumulated over lifetimes, forming sanskaras [imprints] and vasanas [binding desires]. The mind, kind of automatically starts to project what it desires, and finds out where it can gratify them. It is a beautiful jigsaw puzzle in the matrix of existence. Only the one who is steady and has seen through this game can truly appreciate, what is happening for he is totally still, while the Jiva gets involved with the projections and is lost in the maze. The deluded Jiva is under the spell of Maya and believes itself to be limited to the antahkaran and body with its senses, therefore he returns again and again. It is worth noting that no movement can be appreciated unless there is stillness, no sound can be heard unless there is silence, shade could never be appreciated unless there be light. The silence, stillness and light are Purusha.

Shloka 30

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।

निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥ 30॥

Therefore, dedicating all actions to me with your mind fixed on Me, the Self of all, freed from desire and the feeling of meum and cured of mental agitation fight.

The objects, of this external world constantly lead one to identify with the phenomenal world which is constantly changing, and hold our attention; this is called being Bahirmukhi – outward facing, with the result that we forget the unchanging eternal Self, who we truly are. When we finally feel the pull within and turn inwards to the Self for the perennial joy we were searching- it is called being inward turned- Antarmukhi. Dedicating all actions, is actually prayer in action, and this is the highest prayer not just the recitation of some verses, that will free us from desire.

Yet what Shri Krishna exhorts Arjuna to do, is to simply dedicate, the fruit of all actions to the Lord, if he is unable to drop this sense of doer-ship, and be free. This will immediately liberate him from psychological suffering, and he can then with a placid mind apply himself to the job at hand which is the war. At all times if we try to put this principle into practise e.g., while we are working or even playing, then the torture of psychological suffering that we each experience, hoping for one or other outcome, comes to an end. We will find that the outcome of the action, does not entangle us and we start experiencing little, little freedom like Guru Goenkaji used to say—utne utne mukta huay. Truly this is simple.

Karma yoga -Action done with the attitude of surrender to the Lord, ***is always in the present*** – it cannot happen in the past or future – it is therefore dynamic meditation – because we act in that moment only. ***Action should be accompanied by releasing, the previous sanskaras which is the baggage we carry [I, me, and mine] into any action, so the past is renounced for how can we offer stale and sullied action to Shri Krishna? Keeping in mind the attitude of Yajnya an offering unto the Lord, the future is also renounced for the result is offered to Shri Krishna.*** Then we are verily meditating in action- when this BMI [body, mind, intellect] is being used by Shri Krishna to share this most beautiful knowledge, the I, me and mine being absent, meditation is automatically happening. Being an instrument [which is the part of Prakruti] thus, through which he is acting. He too needs this instrument as much as the instrument needs Him. However, if the small I is present, and modifies knowledge for self-aggrandisement, then of course Shri Krishna cannot use it in the skilful manner which is Yoga [Yogah karmasu kaushalam Ch.2 sh. 50]. It seems the skill in execution of an action is inversely proportional to the

presence of the ego [I,do]. It is said the Bansuri is empty, and therefore, Shri Krishna, puts it to His lips and plays the divine tune! So, when we do not spill our sanskaras, on others and since we are not attached to the fruit of the action, both past and future being absent the Karma is pure and perfect. The action is then allowed to be performed, by none other than the Self, with the help of this particular BMI which has taken a physical manifestation. An end to all psychological suffering, what's more an end to bondage by Karma. Shri Krishna says in Chapter 11 sh. 33 Nimitta matra bhav savya sachin.[simply be thou an instrument]. So, all that is required is the attitude of being the instrument, otherwise your karma will bind and 'Trishna' [thirst] the Dukhabijam [seed of sorrow] is born. The one who is an anasuya [without doubt or fault finding] and follows this advice will be liberated. Those who do not follow this advice, will therefore, obviously, come to ruin and return to this sansar of temporary joys and sorrows.

Shloka 33

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि ।

प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥ 33 ॥

*All living creatures follow their tendencies; even the wise man acts according.
To the tendencies of his own nature. Of what use is restraint by force.*

This particular shloka always troubled my intellect for if restraint does not work due to the Gunas which drive even the wise man to a certain course of action, then what can unenlightened beings with aspiration for liberation hope to do? Where is the free will then? Shri Ramana Maharishi has said- we have free will in only aspiring, for Self-realisation and to do sadhana towards it, there is no, no other free will- which implies that the conditionings and sanskaras hopelessly drive one to action.

It was only recently, understanding of this shloka in the context of the next, that I got my answer. While aspiring for Self-realisation, which we have the free will to do, the sadhana entails that we rise above the pairs of opposites as explained in the next shloka.

Shloka 34

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ ।
तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ॥ 34॥

Attraction and repulsion are rooted in all sense objects man should never allow himself to be swayed by them because they are the two principal enemies standing in the way of his redemption

When I first read Sh.33 as expressed above, I was truly disheartened, for even a wise man is subject to his Gunas and I have personally also seen this, besides restraint and suppression make matters worse- so what of fools like me? It is in the very next breath Shri Krishna reassures us and shows us the way out. The Gunas determine our likes and dislikes and propensities, but if our Buddhi is sharp and vigilant, it can catch these thieves that rob us of freedom!

Aai [mother] had explained raag [attraction] and dvesha [aversion] were only meant for your protection.

Both Swami Rama and Eknath explain the terms indriya - senses and indriyaarthe – sense objects. As soon as a sense organ contacts its object, attraction or aversion is generated this leads to an immediate reaction, unless one is vigilant. The reaction generates a chain of further reactions, and this is bondage. If we are vigilant and take the step towards that which is noble, even if it creates aversion initially, we will be able to overcome both aversion and attraction. Shreyas, is that which may initially be difficult to do or like but leads to long term wellbeing while Preyas is that which is pleasing and easy initially, but leads to disaster in the long term. In fact, as we practise this further, we find the challenge of choosing shreyas will vanish, and we will automatically choose it over preyas. It is always more difficult to wake up in the morning and do one's sadhana -shreyas- but in the long run it brings such peace of mind and active joy, that one gets addicted to it. That which is preyas e.g. going to the movies and sleeping late, eating out leads to immediate gratification of the senses but ultimate fatigue, bad stomach or ill health and lack of sleep. Thus, **allowing oneself to be caught in this game of attraction (craving) and aversion are the two supreme obstacles in the path to redemption.** It is amply clear that if we don't go on auto pilot and switch to manual mode, (with regard to attraction and craving, striving for achievement, avoiding and condemning the unpleasant), we will easily get liberated from the grip of Maya.

As referred to earlier the Buddhi is the charioteer, the horses are the senses and the mind are the reins, the deluded Jivatama being the passenger. It is when this Buddhi is purified and knows the right path that we can hope to reach the goal. It felt like a practical and good proposition to imagine Shri Krishna as our charioteer and where then would He lead us to?

Sh.35 Shankara: Desire is the enemy of man.

Shloka 36

अर्जुन उवाच ।

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।

अनिच्छन्नपि वार्ष्णेय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥ 36 ॥

*Now impelled by what, Krishna, does this man commit sin even involuntarily,
as though driven by force.*

Arjuna is well aware that in spite of knowing the right path many times we waver and as if compelled by some unknown force actually engage in unwholesome activity. In Marathi there is a very good saying- 'kallta ahey pun vallat nahee' meaning, it is understood but not getting implemented. He is wondering what that force might be and feels it necessary to ask his beloved Sri Krishna the all- knowing one. Often one feels helplessly drawn towards an action one knows is inherently wrong. Later one even tries to justify it.

Shankara: Vasudeva is here called the Lord (Bhagavat), because He is one in whom the six attributes of unimpeded dominion etc. ever abide collectively and in perfection, and who possesses a complete knowledge of the origin of the universe. Says the Vishnu-Purana: "'Bhaga' means the six attributes — perfect dominion, might, glory, splendour, dispassion and salvation." He is called the Lord (Bhagavat), who knows the origin and the end, the coming and going of beings, what is wisdom and what is ignorance."

Shloka 37

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ॥

महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥ 37 ॥

Shri Bhagwan said: It is desire begotten of the element of Rajas, which appears as wrath; nay, it is insatiable and grossly wicked. Know this to be the enemy in this case.

This answer which is quite simple and yet so profound. Shri Krishna has already explained the cause of action which is the Gunas in particular Rajo Guna which drives one to act through externalising desire and the achievement of objects. The senses are all outward facing and if the mind and intelligence are befuddled, then desire will operate easily through the Rajo Guna and drive one towards the fulfilment of the same. It is as if smoke is covering the light of knowledge or clouds the sun of truth and the action takes place almost unconsciously. The mirage is created that the fulfilment of desire is the cause of contentment and satisfaction, whereas the opposite is true. This is so because desire gives birth to numerous other desires, and thus it is like adding fuel to fire which can never be extinguished. ***The fulfilment of desire breeds pride and the unfulfillment of desire creates anger, both of which delude the intellect and the faculty of discrimination leading to misery in the long term.*** Whatever temporary satisfaction is felt Shri Ramana Maharishi has said, is due, to the subsiding of the agitation that was felt when desire arose.

The wise man on the path, is ever vigilant, avoiding any allurements from desire for that is the sure pathway to misery. He develops Sattva Guna so that his mind is clear, comes under his control and if desire arises, he quickly converts it to just one single desire to learn the truth nothing else. It is the predominance of one or the other Guna, which determines the nature of our response or reaction at any given time, facing any given situation, this again depends on one's conditioning and past sanskaras. A response, is generated through Sattva, and a reaction, through Rajo or Tamoguna. So, no one who is in the manifest form can be considered totally Sattvic or Tamasic or Rajasic. It is futile to be judgemental, always wise to forgive and rectify one's orientation to the Self

which is perfect in each one of us. As explained above the Ego, is not the doer but imagines itself to be, while we are on auto pilot of the Gunas!

Here I am reminded of a story from the life of Gorakshnath when his disciple Adbhanginath said that 'he felt extremely angry with wrong doers and could not control himself what should he do?' Gorakshanath explained – 'do you think you are a 100% correct with no faults?' Abashed Adbhanginath agreed – 'no' – so Gorakshnath replied – 'therefore focus on the good in the same person and your anger will subside; this is all the play of the Gunas.' Even sages act according to their Gunas and it is not at all necessary that they would act according to your expectations, which is another combination of Gunas! So, one combination is judging another combination of Gunas, therefore never judge a sage – only feel whether He/She is free from fear and inspires peace and clarity within you in his presence.

Shloka 38

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।

यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥ 38॥

As fire is covered by smoke, mirror by dust, and embryo by the amnion, so is knowledge covered by desire.

Kama [lust- in general desire], Krodh [anger], Lobha [greed], Moha [clouding of intellect], Mada [arrogance], Matsar [jealousy], are the six weaknesses which man suffers from. The first three, are considered major. Kaam is indeed foremost for it is the root of krodha if desire is not gratified, the cascade of events which follows such as clouding of the intellect, leading to loss of discrimination and as explained in the last chapter ruin and destruction. Just as the mirror which is covered by dust cannot reflect anything similarly a desire filled mind is totally incapable of right choice.

Desire arises from the preponderance of Rajo Guna, the key therefore, is to convert it into Sattva Guna by being vigilant as to where the senses are heading and converting every desire into just the one "I want only You Shri Krishna nothing less will suffice."

Shankara:sh.39 The wise man knows even before suffering the consequence, that he has been led by desire to evil ways, and therefore he feels ever

miserable. Whence desire is a constant enemy of the wise, not of the ignorant. For, the latter regards desire as a friend at the time he thirsts for objects, and it is only when suffering results from it, —but not before, —that he learns the truth that he has been rendered miserable by desire. Wherefore it is a constant enemy of the wise, alone. It is insatiable and greedy; it never has enough, i.e., it finds nothing enough for itself, i.e., there is no limit to its consuming power. The seat of desire. He now tells us where is seated desire which, by enveloping wisdom, forms the enemy of the whole world. The seat of the enemy being known it is easy to kill it.

Sh 40: the seat of desire are the senses, mind (manas), and reason (buddhi).

How to kill out desire?

Sh.41: Wherefore, Jnana is the knowledge of the Self and other things acquired from the 5astra (scripture) and from a teacher (acharya). Vijnyana is the personal experience of the things so taught. Do thou cast off from you the destroyer of Jnana and Vijnyana , which lead to the highest good. It has been taught, “first master the senses, and cast-off desire, thy enemy." Now it may be asked,—Where should one take one's stand and cast off desire? The answer follows

Shloka 42

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥ 42॥

The senses are said to be greater than the body; greater than the senses is mind. Greater than the mind is intellect; and what is greater than the intellect is He, the Self.

Eknath says we are a composite of body, senses, intellect and Atman. We lack harmony between all these due to desire and lack of discipline, once that is established the inner journey is no distance at all. Swami Rama explains beyond the body consciousness, is the field created by sense perception and beyond that is the subtle realm of the mind and beyond that is the vast field of the unconscious, even beyond this is the Atman. In this verse the word ‘para’ is used which means beyond and is the most important indication of who we truly are. If we identify with the body, we are the small self- and if we identify with the Atman, we are the Self which is eternal and immaculate.

Once while attending a class that Swami Veda was taking for the Gurukula students, he asked “Atma kya hai? [what is Atma]” and of course even though not a Gurukul student, I put my hand up and was like the child who knows the answer and wants the teacher to ask her. Swamiji let me answer and like an erudite student I quoted the above shloka, he looked at me and said ‘no, no that is not the answer,’ my jaw dropped my spirits dropped! He looked at his students and one at the back who was standing replied ‘mein hun yeh anubhuti hi atma hai- the experience – ‘I Am’ is Atma.’ Swamiji nodded and looking at me said- ‘we don’t just teach theory here!’

Shankara: The senses are five, the sense of hearing, etc. When compared with the physical body, which is gross, external, and limited, the senses are superior as they are comparatively more subtle and internal, and have a more extensive sphere of action. So say the wise. Superior to the senses is mind (manas, the impulsive nature) which is composed of thoughts and desires, of errors and doubts, (sankalpa and vikalpa). Superior to mind is reason (buddhi) characterized by determination (nischaya). So, He who is behind all things visible, inclusive of reason, the Dweller in the body, whom it has been said— desire, seated in the senses and other quarters, bewilders by enveloping wisdom, —He, the Self, the witness of reason, is superior to reason.

Shloka 43

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।
जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥ 43 ॥

Thus, Arjuna, knowing the Self which is higher than the intellect and subduing the mind by reason kill this enemy in the form of desire that is hard to overcome.

The knowledge of the Truth bestows freedom from fear, makes one invincible but to be That one needs to control the senses and always think, speak and act with awareness. It is absolutely essential to be disciplined. Sri Krishna says having known this Truth kill the enemy of desire and be one with the Self so that delusion can no longer take hold of you. Swami Rama says the objects of this external world constantly lead one to identify with the phenomenal world, which is constantly changing and holds our attention, with the result that we forget the unchanging eternal Self who we truly are.

Summary: Shri Krishna has elaborately explained in this chapter how action should be undertaken, such that it leads to purification of mind, and Knowledge is revealed. The myths regarding what is true Karma Yoga have been dispelled and the importance of using one's intellect emphasised. He answers Arjuna that the greatest enemy, which resides in the senses and mind is desire.

How is one to kill this formidable enemy - desire? Just to summarise what Shri Krishna has told us through this discourse-

- 1. Discriminate, you are the Self and it is Prakruti that acts through the Gunas.*
- 2. Surrender all fruits of action at Shri Krishna's feet and act without attachment and no Karma will accrue.*
- 3. Every act, word, thought should be an offering like a Yajnya, which then automatically frees one of bondage.*

The Self is beyond all that Prakruti has created- body, sense, mind, intellect, ego.

Reflection and Exercises:

- 1. Being Mithyachari is bad. Discuss.*
- 2. Personal reflections on last/current year and What You Hope for new year. What you Learnt.*
- 3. What are the salient features of karma yoga?*
- 4. What is your understanding of body, mind, connection, and interaction?*
- 5. What do you understand by Prakruti? What is your own Prakruti and swadharma?*
- 6. Kindly write a question about a daily life difficulty which Bhagavad Gita answers to you personally.*
- 7. Difference between Jnana yoga and karma yoga.*
- 8. 3-5 lines only of the key practices in daily life that will help keep your mental equilibrium in every situation. Just enumerate as you personally would like to practice in order of importance.*
- 9. How can we be like Janak live in the world but not of it. Kindly give your personal experience and give examples where the concept can be actualised.*

*Reference: Essay on **Yajnya and Karma Yoga**, **Essays on Ancient Wisdom**.*

Discourse 4 - Jnyaan Karmasanyasa yoga - Knowledge of renouncing fruit of action

Shri Krishna has now got Arjuna out of his despondency and explained the two pathways to Self-realisation. In the following three shlokas he explains how he gave this most secret and sacred teaching to Vivasvan, who taught his son Manu, who then gave it to Ikshvaku in the ancient times, it however got corrupted and He, therefore, came down again to share it with his dearest devotee and friend Parantap [destroyer of foes].

Naturally, Arjuna wondered how Shri Krishna albeit a few years older than him could ever have taught Vivasvan? Vivasva is another name of the Sun God. Vasa is to abide Vivasva is to abide in a special manner, the Sun God illumines, nourishes and indeed enlivens all, He is therefore called Vivasvan. He was married to Sanjana also called Saranya the daughter of Sage Vishvakarma. Sanjana found His intense heat unbearable and so ran back to her maternal home leaving behind her shadow- Chaya {no wonder we live in the shadow of Truth} whose son is Manu, the progenitor of man, as he brought forth the human race. His wife was Shatarupa who bore him many sons the first born, to whom this esoteric knowledge was given by Manu, was Ikshvaku - Iksha means eyes and Vaak means speech- so Ikshvaku is one who has control over both the Jnyanendriyas and Karmendriyas.

The very name of this chapter is Jnyana Karma Sanyasa Yoga. Herein is described how karma is to be done renouncing the doer-ship, and how it is only by Jnyana that moksha can be attained. Two other topics are covered as well- Avatarvada- Shri Krishna being an Avatar, and Yajnya which is what the whole of the Universe is engaged in. The Vedic teaching regarding the life of Pravritti, [activity] and Nivritti [renunciation], is the yoga that the Lord is discussing here.

All of this is just so well sequenced and expressed, that it leaves one in awe of the intelligence of our ancient scriptures and the characters therein. So, Arjuna is naturally confused as to how could Shri Krishna have been the one to impart this knowledge to Vivasvan? He is at liberty to ask the Lord for the Lord is his friend. The two share a relationship that is quite extraordinary! The story goes that Arjuna was so devoted to Shri Krishna, that one night while he was asleep, he was heard muttering something, when Shri Krishna went close to hear what it was, he heard only Krishna, Krishna, Krishna.... Arjuna could thus confide his weakness at the beginning of the war, only to Shri Krishna, who was the only

one who could understand and guide him out of the despondency. Shri Krishna does not share this Knowledge with Yudhishtira or Bhima but with Arjuna alone who is ready, receptive and respectful to receive this teaching.

Shankara: It is only when possessed of the strength of this Yoga, that they can protect the brahmanas [those who know Brahman], the spiritual class. And when the spiritual and ruling classes are well maintained, it is possible to maintain the world. That Yoga is imperishable, because of its imperishable results. Indeed, Moksha, the fruit of this Yoga of complete devotion to right knowledge, never perishes.

It is quite probable that Shri Krishna deliberately leads Arjuna into this confusion, for the logical question that Arjuna might now put to him would be “How am I to know [notice how he humbly asks not with any doubt on his part, he would only like his ignorance to be removed] that it was you who imparted this knowledge to Vivasvan, when you are of recent origin and they are buried in antiquity?” Now ‘The Bhagvad Gita’ rolls on. Shri Krishna now starts to reveal who He is and answers many a spiritual doubt of Arjuna and explains later the mechanism of manifestation and the functioning of the Universe. We are now in for a treat!

Discussed below are selected shlokas from this chapter which are exemplary and bring to our daily life a meaning, practice and purpose.

Qualifications for a teacher:

1. Brahma Nishtha - Full time teacher totally dedicated- established – enlightened.
2. Akaamahataha – not destroyed by desire. No personal gratification. [no cult formation]
3. Shrotriya – well versed in the Vedas to transmit knowledge systematically.

Shloka 5

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।

तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परन्तप ॥ ५ ॥

Shri Bhagwan said: Arjuna you and I have passed through many births; I remember them all, you do not remember, Oh chastiser of foes.

Arjuna's confusion is a natural one, as stated earlier for the one who is limited in time and can only comprehend the present form as real, it is necessary, to know how this might ever be possible. Those, however, who have attained knowledge of the timeless, can easily comprehend the philosophy of reincarnation. Death is but a habit of the body, not complete annihilation. It is inevitable, and when accepted as such fear has no place to arise. Fear of losing what one has, of not getting what one wants, of the unknown etc. etc the list of fears is endless, and once it makes the unconscious it's abode it is hard to overcome. Arjuna is thus a victim of fear. The truth of the three bodies should be known and understood to alleviate this fear. The gross body dies and returns to the elements. The subtle body carries the impressions and vasanas, to the next realm and when ready again manifests in another gross body. The casual body is at the core of the two and this is the seed for continuous rebirth. Yoga teaches how to go beyond all three. Shri Krishna is the source and hence to him past present and future can be viewed simultaneously.

Shankara sees from the point of view of the Supreme Divinity and says: Thou knowest not, because thy power of vision is obstructed by thy past action, good and bad (dharma and a-dharma). I, on the other hand, know them, because I am by nature eternal, pure, wise, unbound, and My power of vision is unobstructed. The next shloka explains the logical question, of how then can the Lord manifest, if He has no Karma to bind Him. Shri Krishna explains, it is by the power of His yoga maya and that Prakruti Herself emanates from Him.

As long as we believe we are the body, we cannot escape a disruption of consciousness at the time of death, once however, we transcend this false belief, there can be no break in our awareness of the continuity of existence.

The Universe began with the big bang 15 billion years ago. Our Shrutis have told us of this believe it or not. Prior to the Big Bang there was no time or space only a dimensionless point. As told to us in the Guru Geeta - shloka 119 Gurudhyanam tatha krutva svayam brahmamayo bhavet, Pinde pade tatha rupe mukto asau natra sanshayah. Shiva is that beyond the dimensionless point- Bindu and therefore of form- Rupa. The one who knows this - the Guru-knows the secret of Creation!

Shloka 7

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥ 7॥

Arjuna whenever righteousness is on the decline and unrighteousness in the ascendant, then I body Myself forth.

Shloka 8

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।

धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ॥ 8॥

For the protection of the virtuous for the extirpation of the evil doers, and for establishing Dharma on a firm footing I manifest myself from age to age.

Shri Krishna speaks not as a personality but as the source of universal love and truth. Whenever there is a downfall in righteousness and an abundance of corruption and wickedness, the Lord manifests to uplift the lovers of knowledge and truth (Bharat) and to destroy the wicked. This verse is often misused by people who are lazy and expect that the Incarnation will come and save them. This is a false notion and can give rise to pseudo -Avatars as well!

The Lord who is enthroned in every heart comes to life in a blessed individual in every country, every age, to bring humanity back to the spiritual path. If we can establish peace in our hearts, return love for hatred and live for the welfare of the community we have changed the world picture.

It is said that the Kalki Avatar is none other than the change in consciousness, that will occur in the hearts of humans- making them just Beings! Having transcended this limitation of Naam and Rupa one transcends this dimension that will transform the world we inhabit.

Shloka 10

वीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः ।

बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥ 10॥

Completely rid of attachment, fear and anger, wholly absorbed in me depending on me and purified by the penance of wisdom, many have become one with Me even in the past.

In this verse Sri Krishna is asserting that it is possible for the relative I to become the pure absolute I. By giving up desire which is the seed for rebirth, one overcomes the misery of birth and death.

Throw away these three enemies- selfish attachment, fear and anger - for this, meditation can be of enormous help. Only when I am free of these three the Lord will fill me with His own love, His own wisdom, His own beauty- Manmaya (Filled with me). madbhavam aagatah- he enters my Being.

Karmayoga- i.e. Selfless action is said to result in emotional purification, and this is very easy to see. As we work for the welfare of all beings, surrendering the fruit of the action at the feet of the Lord, our selfish attachment starts to reduce and thereby our fear of loss, and anger from thwarted desire also reduce. Thus, having been purified of these three enemies we can become worthy of discovering the Lord within. In my own experience meditation over several years, has given the mind the capacity to recognise habit patterns which enslave it and to enable it to reverse them; thereby giving us the freedom to respond rather than react. As we further our practice by releasing our habit patterns in daily life, we gain mastery over the mind and meditation yields newer and newer discoveries of what lies within.

Shankara on sh. 10 'Absorbed in Me', knowing Brahman, i.e., seeing their identity with Ishvara, taking refuge in Me, Paramesvara, the Supreme Lord, i.e., firmly devoted to wisdom only. Jnana- tapas: religious austerity (tapas) in the form of jyana or knowledge of the Highest Self, Paramatman. —This compound indicates that Devotion to knowledge is quite independent of all other austerities (tapas').—Having attained to highest purity by means of this fire of austerity {tapas}, many have attained moksha.

Shankaras commentary on the next shloka seemed very informative and so have included the English translation of it: Shri Krishna says: I reward men by granting them the things they desire, just in accordance with the way in which they seek Me and the motive with which they seek Me ; for, they do not seek for moksha. One cannot indeed pursue pleasure and at the same time seek for moksha. Wherefore, I reward seekers of fruits by securing to them their selfish ends; I reward the unselfish, who do their prescribed duties and seek for moksha, by granting them knowledge; I reward men of knowledge who have renounced the world and seek for moksha, by granting them moksha; similarly,

I reward men in distress by relieving them from distress. Thus, do I reward all, just in the way they seek Me. But never do I reward any out of mere affection or aversion, or from delusion.

Shloka 17

कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।

अकर्मणश्च बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥ 17 ॥

The truth about action must be known and the truth about inaction also must be known; even so the, the truth about prohibited action (Vikarma) must be known. For, mysterious are the ways of action.

Arjuna would have followed Shri Krishna's word and done what he was bidden, but still Shri Krishna sites the authority of the ancient seekers who also walked this path of selfless action towards liberation and were endowed with knowledge which then led them to liberation and goes on to explain the three confusing terms Karma, Akarma and Vikarma. These are elaborated on to reveal their true significance.

Shri Krishna does this because, even great leaders and icons are bewildered about what might be the right action in a certain situation [e.g. Arjuna himself]. In spite of great calculations and restraint they sometimes feel indecisive, left wondering about the best course of action. Swami Rama has resolved this dilemma so clearly by explaining what right action is. He says that Karma - action which is performed with a tranquil mind and with non-attachment is right action! How simple is this guideline- first make the mind calm and then introspect whether there is self-interest, in the proposed action or it is for the ultimate good of all at heart, that the action is being undertaken? If the latter, then by all means go ahead- it will result in the right outcome besides bringing more peace in its wake. Shri Krishna explains what action is, what inaction is, so that Truth may reveal itself. We would all feel what's so complicated? If this body moves it is action and if it sits quiet, it is inaction. Is it so? Not really- even thought is an action. Even when one says 'I am not doing anything'- if the sense of doer-ship is there 'that I am not doing'- one is still doing! Wise is the one who knows he is not the doer, for he is the Self and action is done by the body and Prakruti.

Here a story in the life Matsyendranath and Gorakshnath comes to mind. Matsyendranath was the Guru of Gorakshnath and they were the founders of the Nath movement which restored purity and sanctity in the behaviour of the monks. Yet, Matsyendranath had married a queen in the south and Gorakshnath came, most angrily, to rescue him from the snares of a woman. He could not understand how his most beloved Guru, fell prey to the attractions of a woman. Most distressed he could barely bring himself to ask when Matsyendranath said 'let me tell you a story.' Gorakshnath was in no mood to hear stories but could say nothing as after all the reverence he felt for Matsyendranath always overwhelmed him. Matsyendranath continued. 'Once an ascetic arrived outside the village, and Shri Krishna's two wives Rukmini and Satyabhama wanted to take food for him and prepared nice dishes. As the food was ready there was a heavy downpour and the Yamuna was in flood, the level rose and the ladies could not have crossed over to serve the ascetic. They approached Shri Krishna and asked him for help. Shri Krsishna simply said 'go to the riverbank and tell Ma Yamuna, "if Shri Krishna has never copulated, please make way for us to go to the other bank."' They did as they were told, all the time wondering at the falsehood of Shri Krishna's statement, but they knew of His immense power and so they trusted Him. Sure enough, Ma Yamuna parted and made a path for them. They reached the other shore and served the ascetic the sumptuous meal and as they were returning, they were once again faced with the same situation and wondered what to do as they had not asked Shri Krishna about the return. Seeing their consternation, the ascetic told them, "simply, say to Ma Yamuna, if the ascetic has never eaten then please do make way for us to return." Even before they completed the request Ma Yamuna parted, the queens were now totally flummoxed as to how was it possible, that this mantra worked, they had just finished feeding the ascetic a sumptuous meal. They felt Shri Krishna was different but this ascetic? As soon as they reached the palace, even before going to place the vessels they approached Shri Krishna and asked for an explanation. Shri Krishna avoided answering saying, they would not understand and when they would not budge began to explain.... "The one who abides in the Self, even though His body acts He is not indulging in any action." When Matsyendranath had finished the story Gorakshnath understood and bowed once again before His Guru with utmost reverence but added "That is true, but we must now leave and return, for the work we need to accomplish for the lay public, cannot understand this truth."

Even thought and word are actions. Eknath says if anyone doubts the power of Mantra, let him just reflect on the power of the advertisements nowadays. They so cling to our mind that we even take them to bed with us, waking up to the music in our heads. We get convinced that the luxury of having something (which in fact is most unnecessary), is in fact absolutely essential and even borrow money to get it and fall for easy EMIs etc. the tale is endless. All a result of Rajofied tamoguna! Even thought, is a subtle action and we all know that action is preceded by thought!

The sattvic mind is the tranquil mind and gives one a chance to respond appropriately. There is a saying in Sanskrit- sangat doshagunanam bhavati. - 'By association we can become good and selfless and by association we can become bad and selfish.' Action arises at the level of thought the Buddha in the Dhammapad, has said that we are the result of what we have thought. The thoughts that germinate in our subconscious drive us to action.

The term Akarma needs to be understood in detail. In its highest meaning it denotes total surrender - becoming an instrument so empty that the Lord can create music through it, like the Basuri [flute] which has the good fortune to be put to the lips of the Lord. Ordinarily, also, we can make a mistake- things at a distance seem static even though moving e.g., stars, and when we move in relation to another body, we feel it is also moving even though static e.g., Palm trees on the shore from a ship, they seem to be moving away from us. Thus, an illusion of action happens even though the Self does not act. We actually have no option but simply to act right, through a sattvic mind. The Ultimate in meditation is also total inaction, that is not even the action of thought- that's when sarva shaithilya (total relaxation) occurs. The one who has gone beyond the Gunas and the Body Mind Intellect identification, is the one whose action is Akarma, inaction for there is no doer of it, it simply happens from source. Yet most of us are attached to laziness and term that as inaction- after all I am not doing anything. This arises once again from Tamas and is indolence. Most of the time, it is an attachment to procrastinate and to be lazy. Some even believe that it's better to avoid taking action, get attached to inaction(akarma) or procrastinate taking action, this is even worse than doing the wrong action, this is not inaction.

Vikarma on the other hand is action which is prohibited as it inflicts suffering on others. This usually results from greed, lust, anger - the three major enemies of man for example, Duryodhana's actions. Thus, any action arising from anger, resentment, or any negative emotion is bound to harm oneself or another and these are termed Vikarmas, mostly born of Tamas but need Rajas to be performed and gain momentum.

Mysterious indeed are the ways of Karma- my own take about it is that any experience good or bad that takes us towards the divine is good karma and which takes us away is bad Karma. Even ill health or financial loss which seem like disasters are blessings in disguise, if we were but to know how to turn inwards (antarmukhi). Nothing seems more apt to illustrate the point than the pandemic of the Corona Virus. It has brought humanity together as one single unit and humbled us into realising we are not the Karta (doer). It remains for us but to watch vigilantly- this is not to say we should be attached to inaction and become lazy, as explained earlier.

Shloka 20

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।

कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित्करोति सः ॥ 20 ॥

He, who having totally given up attachment to actions and their fruit, no longer depends on anything in the world, and is ever content, does nothing at all, though fully engaged in action.

Actions performed without the desire for the fruit are considered to be pure actions. Therefore, when we hanker and are attached to the fruit of action, we look to the future, for happiness and are never fulfilled. One who has learnt the art and science of desire less action, is considered a Pandit as he has burnt desire in the fire of knowledge. He is well aware that he is not the doer, even though externally, he may be engaged in tremendous activity. The wise man feels ever complete.

Actions are actually thoughts, externalised, they are usually a result of emotions. Vikarma is action arising from uncontrolled, unchecked emotions. The power that emotion can generate in our actions, needs to be harnessed to the power of reason to get the right balance for selfless activity. The true

sadhaka, therefore, combines his love for the Guru while doing his Sadhana and this makes the task seem a joy rather than a penance! It is the Sankalpa Shakti (Resolve), which replaces the desire for sense gratification. Sankalpa Shakti is higher, than both mental thought and the force of emotion. It is developed with repeated commitment to selfless action. Tranquillity is a state of being that is attained by the disciplined and desire free mind. That is the result of giving up attachments- the Bhagvad Gita teaches us a way of action with LOVE and therefore liberates.

The wise man is ever satisfied, having abandoned all external supports. Tyaktva karmaphalasangham- “do not get entangled in the result.” Shri Krishna explains that unless we are detached from the outcome, we will be forever disturbed at the slightest rebuff and that would lead you to violence, in which case no action would be done with peace. Nitya tripta- means always satisfied- thus one who is willing to accept any challenge, is forever content in whatever he is doing. Any movement in the mind if caused by anger, lust, greed, fear or any agitation, alienates us from our true nature. Thus, Nityatrupta – ever fulfilled and content, indicates a union with the divinity within and therefore every action is undertaken with equanimity. Shankara: Even Dharma is a sin, in the case of him who seeks liberation, in as much as it causes bondage. He who is liberated from both [Dharma and Adharma] he is liberated from samsara [for there is no doer].

In my reflections over this shloka and the illumined commentaries given above, (as many others in the Bhagvad Gita) it became clear to me that the mind as we know it, is a bundle of memories and conditionings as also a self-created image, which we take to be self. This self then wants everything for itself, it separates us from manifestation. Once we start following the teachings, we begin to understand the underlying unity that we are. Further, we can come to this realisation by starting to observe our thoughts and emotions, this creates a space within and gives us a chance to pause. Once the pause lengthens to an appreciable time frame, we get introduced to the Self- which is the same in ALL. Then Nityatrupta (forever content) is the result and tyaktva karmaphalasangham (renunciation of attachment to the result of any action) an automatic happening. Then one also becomes free of all dependency- we become free of any need for refuge! ***Actions of great intricacy and extent keep***

happening with no “doer” within. Like the TV screen on which great scenes of action are displayed, the Self is still, yet no part of the movie could have been seen without the screen similarly, no action can happen without the Self.

Shloka 22

यदृच्छालाभसन्तुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः ।

समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥ 22 ॥

The Karmayogi who is contented with whatever is got unsought, is free from jealousy and has transcended all pairs of opposites like joy and grief, and is balanced in success and failure, is not bound by his action.

Swami Rama stresses on inaction in action by giving up attachments and going beyond duality. The one who has no expectations is ever content. He who has appointments with the world will have disappointments!

Ekknath explains that the greatest paradox is that we are forever looking to separate pain from pleasure and one day arrive at only pleasure, although no one has ever succeeded in this project- we are confident we will. The pair of opposites- gain and loss, success and failure, fame and ignominy are two sides of the same coin. In fact, if no one notices you - it should be spelling freedom, not the other way around. *What is it that makes us feel complete only on getting applauded or meeting success at any venture? Does that not indicate that we do not feel complete in ourselves and somehow need an outside agency to prop us up continually.* So, first we need to come to terms with this fact that no such utopia exists in this world which is built on the blocks of pain and pleasure. *The intellect thrives on duality and perishes in Unity.* If we cease to compare, evaluate or judge and interpret the need, the intellect will vanish. To go beyond the opposites is the aim- as Ramana has said then you shall find everlasting joy. The word Vimatsara is also a powerful one for it means- do not compare with others. You are a whole and unique expression of the divine why demean yourself or glorify yourself in relation with others? This is a modern age malady and leads to rivalry, unhealthy competitiveness, and psychological suffering which is another form of bondage. The central teaching of the Gita is to be the one who treats success and failure alike.

This is one of my favourite shlokas as it promises that karma cannot bind you if you rise above the opposites. Treating success and failure alike not being jealous of anyone go beyond duality and karma shall not bind you. It is quite simple if we see through the game- for one to experience this world in time and space there has to be the pair of opposites- one cannot know light without darkness, sunshine without shade, pleasure without pain - the very fabric of life is made of these two threads. To deny anyone, is to deny life itself. Aiming to experience only pleasure is living in a fool's paradise. So having understood this it is easy to step out and beyond this, jealousy cannot arise and the intellectual activity is immediately put to naught. The Upanishads teach us the cause of suffering. We all agree suffering exists, the question is WHY? Because of the following- Avidya (ignorance) and Apoornamanyata (feeling of incompleteness). Apoornamayata is the feeling that getting this or that will make us complete, for example, finding a life partner, getting a child, and so on. However, at the end of all of this "getting," one still feels hollow and lost- little realising that we are complete in our Self and can never, be complete in this world, which has duality as its very basis. Ignorance or Avidya- is the other cause of suffering- ignorance about what? About what is Anitya- or transient - we cling to that which by its very nature is fleeting. How then are we to find everlasting happiness and be free from bondage?

Shankara: The sage is satisfied with whatever he may obtain by chance with or without effort, to sustain his body, ever equanimous not affected by duality – heat or cold, and free from envy and jealousy, who is calm whether or not he obtains food for the body and other things required for the body, seeing action in inaction and vice versa ever steady in the knowledge of his true Self, always disowning agency "I do nothing at all, the energies act on energies." He does no act at all and is not bound, since action and its cause, which are the source of bondage, have been burnt in the fire of wisdom. That man does no action, even though performing activities for he is one with Self and has seen the non-existence of agent, action and result.

Shloka 24

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥ 24 ॥

In the practice of seeing Brahma everywhere in a form of sacrifice, Brahma is the ladle; Brahma, again, is the oblation; Brahma is the fire, Brahma itself is the sacrificer and so Brahma itself constitutes the act of pouring the oblation into the fire. And finally, Brahma is the goal to be reached by him who is absorbed in Brahma as the act of such sacrifice.

Brahma pervades all, there is nothing other than Brahma and thus the one who is offering, by whatever he is offering into whatever he offers is all Brahma. Sadhakas and yogis say this mantra before meals to remind themselves of the truth of the ONE. Swami Rama goes on to explain all the Universe is doing, is a Yajna which means a sacrifice- an Offering in fact. There are therefore, external offerings like the sacrifices done to get sense gratification, and material gains, and are not of any intrinsic value, and those done internally such as pranayama, internal dialogue to attain truth. The various modes of Sadhana, are all in fact an oblation from Brahma to Brahma. The internal yajna is to attain freedom from bondage.

This is a shloka recited prior to partaking of any food, it is meant to offer all that is received first to Brahman and then accepting the same as Prasad (blessing). The entire cosmos runs on the principle of a Yajna or Offering- unless the earth rotates round its own axis it is unable to circum-ambulate the sun, unless the Sun burns its gases it is unable to shine, unless the seed breaks through its skin it cannot become a sapling. All of Nature is replete with Yajna.

There are said to be five different kinds of Yajna:

1. Pitru Yajna- offerings made for the ancestors
2. Bhuta yajna- offerings made to living beings
3. Atithi yajna- offerings made to guests.
4. Dev Yajna offerings to the Gods and
5. Brahma Yajna - offerings for liberation. This particular shloka indicates that life itself is an offering - we as physicians know, that in every cell, there is a continuous chain of events, which could easily be termed a sacrifice required for the survival of the cell, the mitochondria would be the fire pit, in which this Yajna takes place! Knowing that our body is undergoing a process of 'sacrifice', at the cellular level should indicate that for our very existence, in this dimension, the body is expending itself every moment, and when it runs out

of fuel, it will come to an end. It would therefore be wise to realise, that it is all a play of Brahma and thus be liberated from DESIRE.

Shankara on Brahma Yajnya: Thus, the action performed by him, who wishes to set an example to the world, is in reality no action, as it has been destroyed by the realisation of Brahman. This representation as a sacrifice (Yajnya), of the right knowledge possessed by him, who has given up all rites and has renounced all action is quite in its place, as serving to extol that right knowledge. For him who has realised the Supreme Reality, the instrument of offering and other accessories connected with the actual sacrifice, are nothing but Brahman, who is one with his own Self. The Lord here tries to remove all duality. The Lord extolls this wisdom sacrifice [yajnya] as the highest form, other forms like Daiva yajnya which are expounded in the next few shlokas, are all inferior, to Jnana Yajnya for their aim is mundane prosperity.

From verse 25-30

The different yajnyas described:

1. Daiva yajnya
2. Brahman yajnya
3. Yajnya of sense control
4. Yajnya of mind control
5. Yajna of self-restraint
6. Dravya [materials]yajnya
7. Tapo[austerity] yajnya
8. Yoga [Karma yoga]yajna
9. Svadhyaya[daily enjoined spiritual practices] yajnya
10. Pranayama yajnya
11. Niyatahara [[mealtime]yajnya
12. Jnana yajnay is supreme as it leads to freedom from suffering.

Shloka 34

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।

उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥ 34॥

*Understand the true nature of that knowledge by approaching seers of truth.
If you prostrate at their feet, render them service, and question them with an*

open and guileless heart, those wise seers of truth will instruct you in that Knowledge.

The shlokas preceding have explained the various types of yajnyas seekers perform, to get specific results and even those that bring about Moksha, although not immediately, but in due course. The one who does not perform yajnya, can never be happy even in this world, what to speak of the next. Jnana Yajnya is supreme and a seeker should therefore go, to a Self-Realised Master, in the manner described [given below], to attain that knowledge which shall set him free.

The student and teacher perform a little ceremony before the student becomes a disciple. The student brings dried twigs and prostrates before the teacher, who warmly receives him and one by one offers the twigs to the fire, in a symbolic gesture of burning the sanskaras (tendencies that hold us to the mundane world), so that the blessing of knowledge flows into the disciple. The disciple must be humble and receptive, whatever question he puts to the teacher, should be with an attitude of reverence. In modern psychology the therapist tries to play this role to guide the client, out of his miserable mind tantrums, however, unless the client is open to his suggestions and actually follows them, the therapy is doomed to failure. The therapist on his part should have practised, what he preaches and deal compassionately. Here, the therapist is a fully enlightened Being- Shri Krishna - who is instructing Arjuna to have the right attitude, to keep an open mind, for the teaching to take root in his heart- Swami Rama.

‘Spiritual awareness is not taught, it is caught!’ Eknath. This is to say that if we throw open the windows of our consciousness, we can absorb the Knowledge the Guru is. Of what use is worldly knowledge if we do not know who we are? The Guru is our Atman he is waiting to give you a glimpse of yourself, you only have to open your heart to him, and absorb the Truth by a process similar to osmosis. Yes, He is pure Emptiness and His body is a frame that houses it, just look through and you become One with THAT which You are.

Shankara: By this the Lord means to say only that knowledge which is imparted by those who have realised the Truth, and no other knowledge, can prove

effective. Then thou shalt not again fall into this error. Shankara's poem- "tataha kim tataha kim" expresses this sentiment.

What I have experienced is a certain expansion of the heart almost a physical sensation in the presence of a Guru and it has always humbled me. They exude divine love, which penetrates a receptive mind and leaves it in a state of wonder, as well as the confidence that this very LOVE is Me too. Joy and Peace automatically follow and do not need to be cultivated.

Shloka 36

अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृतमः ।

सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं सन्तरिष्यसि ॥ 36 ॥

Even if you were the most sinful of all sinners, this Knowledge alone would carry you, like a raft, across all your sins.

Shankara: Wisdom is the consumer of all sins and actions. Wisdom destroys all sins like a well kindled fire reduces all fuel to ashes; from this we understand right knowledge is the cause that renders all fruitive action impotent.

Once the sadhaka gains spiritual knowledge, he does not slip back into old habit patterns. Just as fire turns everything to ashes, Truth destroys the veil of illusion. First with discipline, one is able to withdraw the senses from the sense objects, then with further persistence, from sense perception and thoughts which arise. With continued vigilance he determines the source of these thoughts and stops identifying with the deep-rooted habit patterns, which arise from the unconscious mind and latent tendencies. He is then known as the seer or Rishi for he simply observes without identification, with the power of discretion- Vivek. This results in effortless dispassion- Vairagya, and thus he is free from bondage. Shri Krishna is instructing Arjuna to follow this antar- yoga (inward looking), through which even the greatest of sinners can cross the river of delusion with ease, making Knowledge (Vivek- Vairagya) the raft.

Shri Ramkrishna has said "One lit matchstick is enough to turn a bundle of cotton to ashes- such is the fate of the sanchit karma of a jnani!"

It must be recalled that Arjuna was concerned about incurring sin by killing so many and leaving widows which will then bring about the downfall of the

family. Vivek and vairagya form the raft that can take you across the stormy sea of samsara. Personally, I love this shloka for it gives me hope. It proclaims that even a sinner can cross the ocean of delusion with the raft of Jnana (Knowledge). After reading the commentaries of the Sages Swami Rama and Eknath however, I felt a little disheartened for they still seem to indicate- hard work and discipline cannot be escaped! There is of course great wisdom in what they say, for we cannot develop that sensitivity and stillness so essential to exercise Vivek. Vivek is only about what I am and what I am not. Once the identification with personality is dropped Truth becomes apparent and Vairagya effortless.

Shloka 39

श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।

ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ 39 ॥

He who has mastered his senses, is exclusively devoted to his practice and. Is full of faith, attains Knowledge; having had the revelation of Truth, he immediately attains supreme peace in the form of God realisation.

This shloka is very important for the sadhaka, for he has to have devotion and reverence for his Guru who has trodden the path. It is with faith and diligence in practicing his sadhana, controlling his senses and thereby the mind, that the disciple attains true Knowledge. Peace and tranquillity follow. Those who are riddled with doubt and negativity, are unable to attain any success, in this world and cannot make progress on the spiritual path either.

Here Shraddha does not mean mere blind faith, but a strong trust based on inner experience. We each feel a certain presence within, which guides us in our difficult times. Like Ramana Maharishi has directed us inward - if one can but know "Who am I?" All other questions fall by the side, and one can attain the peace and tranquillity that passeth all understanding. Shri Krishna says unless you have this abiding Shraddha, it is very hard to follow rigorous discipline of withdrawing from and controlling the senses, however, once that is achieved exclusive devotion to practise becomes possible and attainment of spiritual wisdom a reality. Only the one who has Shraddha attains Jnana, this is so because he does not require outside confirmation of his inner experience. Shraddha as defined by Eknath- is a firm conviction of the tenets outlined by the Guru and following the direction pointed to. The Guru can only point the

way we have to walk it ourselves, and this becomes hugely possible by having Shraddha.

Shankara: A man full of faith obtains wisdom. But he may be slow; whence it is enjoined that he should ever be intently devoted, to the means of obtaining wisdom, such as constant attendance on the Teachers (Gurus). A man of faith and devotion may not have mastery over the senses; whence it is also enjoined that he should withdraw his senses away from their engrossment in objects. Such a man of faith, devotion and self-control is sure to obtain wisdom. Mere external acts such as long prostration before the Guru, may fail to produce the required effect, since they may be tinged with hypocrisy. But hypocrisy is impossible when a man is full of faith and so on. Whence these are the certain means of acquiring wisdom. —What is the result of this acquisition of wisdom? —The answer follows: Having obtained wisdom, he swiftly attains the Supreme Peace, called Moksha. That the right knowledge quickly leads to moksha is an established truth clearly taught by all sastras as well as reason.

Shloka 40

अज्ञश्चाश्रद्धानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति ।

नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ॥ 40॥

He who lacks discrimination, is devoid of faith, and is at the same time possessed by doubt, is lost to the spiritual path. For the doubting soul there is neither this world nor the world beyond, nor even happiness.

Swami Rama and Eknath both emphasise the fact of discipline and faith being essential for attaining the Truth.

Our mind is made up of: - Manas, Budhi, Chitta and Ahankar. This our inner instrument is also called Antahkaran. Manas is that part of the mind which is forever indecisive and evaluating any stimulus (from all sense organs and the emotional and rational aspects of the mind) without coming to any conclusion forever vacillating. Buddhi is that part of the mind which makes the decision and takes a course of action it feels fit and sustains it. Ahankar is the EGO or that, which gives us the idea of a separate self (the one whose name, form, gender, possessions, conditionings, memories - a conglomerate of identity). Chitta deals with memory. The source of all these, is the three Gunas of Prakriti

- Sattva/ Rajas/ and Tamas. Therefore, our inner environment varies according to the proportion of these Gunas.

The one whose Buddhi is not in charge, remains in doubt and thereby suffers, enormous indecision and doubt. Shri Krishna has said, even Vikarma, wrong action is better than akarma, no action [not the akarma of the yogi described in sh.17]. To make our Buddhi strong we need to train it, by taking small resolves, which we carry out and then taking bigger ones and honouring our own commitments, so that we build a clear and courageous Buddhi which can take charge. Once the Buddhi learns from its mistakes and becomes strong, it can direct the Manas to practise meditation at a given time etc., and transform the entire Antahkaran, such that the Ahankar, no longer disturbs the tranquillity of the mind and can then again be used by Buddhi, as essential to transact in the world without getting deluded by it.

Shankara: ***The man who knows not the Self is ruined, as also the man who has no faith in the teachings and the words of his Guru, and the man whose mind is full of doubts. No doubt the ignorant and the faithless are ruined but not to the same extent as a man of doubting mind. He is the most sinful of all, even this world which is common to all men is not won by a sceptic, nor the other world, nor happiness for even these things come within the sweep of his doubt. Wherefore thou shalt not doubt.***

Shloka 42

तस्मादज्ञानसम्भूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः ।

छित्त्वेन संशयं योगमातिष्ठोतिष्ठ भारत ॥ 42 ॥

Therefore, Arjuna slashing to pieces, with the sword of knowledge, this doubt in your heart, born of ignorance, establish yourself in Karmayoga in the shape of even mindedness, and stand up for the fight.

Swami Rama explains that it is the Manas that doubts for it can process only the sensory data. The Buddhi – Intellect is higher than Manas and has the capability to discriminate and guide, towards correct action leading to progress in sadhana but doubt can still creep in. This is so because by itself the Buddhi is not an adequate tool to comprehend the Self which is beyond both. For Knowledge- Truth to be stabilised and experienced a higher faculty is required

and that is Intuitive Knowledge, which has its source in the Atma Itself. Only then can the Self be experienced and this occurs only by Grace! Then one reaches the doubt free state, getting established in even mindedness.

Beautifully explained by Eknath saying that doubt is inherent in us, therefore, we doubt others, we separate ourselves, never quite sure of another's love. The same sentiment applies to our spiritual discipline and towards our Guru as well. Physical laws like gravity, we do not dispute but are not convinced of the validity of spiritual laws. The Ishawasya Upanishad says, "tena tyaktena bhunjihithaah" which means renounce and enjoy, Eknath himself adds he would like to say renounce and rejoice. Renounce seems to have a negative connotation but not tyaktva- for it is the renunciation of the ego, there can result no greater joy, than that! So Arjuna is asked to slash this doubt with the sword of knowledge and get up to fight.

In my limited experience also even though we trust our Guru a background doubt remains- 'am I capable of enlightenment?' This very doubt sabotages our effort and we get discouraged. The true Grace is felt when our inner Guru is awakened and from then on, a subtle trust develops which prompts us on the path, disbursing any cloud of doubt covering the Buddhi which has been obstructing our sadhana. Ultimate fear and doubt are resolved only when Truth is revealed but at least, we do not slacken in our effort and devotedly persevere. Nisargadatta Maharaj when he was asked how long it took him to realise the Self he said- 'Just three years, my Guru told me that I am not the body, and I trusted him and discovered it for myself.'

Shankara: Doubt is most sinful. It is born of ignorance and lies in the Buddhi. Kill it with right knowledge of the Self. Knowledge is destructive of all evil, such as grief, folly and the like. Having thus slain doubt apply thyself to Karmayoga, the means of right knowledge. Now rise and fight O descendent of Bharata.

The 4th chapter on Jnana Karma Sanyas yoga closes thus again emphasising Jnana but exhorting Arjuna to action- Get Up and Fight!

Summary: *Shri Krishna introduced the concept of karma yoga and Jnana yoga in chapter two. He placed Jnana yoga above Karma Yoga in that chapter. In chapter three, Shri Krishna emphasised the case for Karma yoga. Shri Krishna stated that Jnana marga is full of hardships and difficulties and it's not for all. Shri Krishna taught us the true meaning of Karma yoga which has an element of Jnana too. We learnt that if we incorporate at least some of the salient features of Karma yoga, our intellect would be purified and would be ready for Jnana. Shri Krishna taught that Karma yoga, would be a stepping stone for Self-realisation. The prerequisite for removal of ignorance, of our true nature [Swarup] is to have a ekagra [one pointed intellect] Buddhi and the prerequisite for that is chitta shuddhi [pure mind] and the prerequisite for that is Karma yoga!*

The perfect Karma yoga is a form of Jnana in two senses. 1. Jnana being the true nature of Self and Self's relationship with Karma, and 2. There is only Brahman who is pervading all actions, and nothing else (shloka 24)

Chapter four is very aptly called Jnana Karma Sanyasa meaning Knowledge, and Renunciation of Karma. The main features of this chapter are:

Avatar Vad: Shri Krishna for the first time reveals Himself to Arjuna as to Who He is. We learn the truth about incarnations. He is the Timeless Truth. For the sake of establishing dharma He appears again and again in this material realm.(Shloka 7 and Shloka 8)

The superiority of Karma yoga is established, and we learn that it is a form of Jnana, if performed with Buddhi. Different categories of karma: karma, akarma and vikarma, are explained. Shri Krishna does this because, even great leaders and icons are bewildered, about what might be the right action, in a certain situation [e.g. Arjuna himself]. In spite of great calculations and restraint they sometimes feel indecisive and are left wondering about the best course of action. Karma [yoga]- is action which is performed with a tranquil mind and with non-attachment, that is right action. The term Akarma needs to be understood in detail. In its highest meaning it denotes total surrender - becoming an instrument so empty that the Lord can create music through it. It is termed Akarma, inaction, for there is no doer of it, it simply happens from

source, it does not mean 'not doing' or laziness. Vikarma of course is action which should be avoided.

Jnana yoga in this chapter is indeed in the guise of Karma yoga. Action is performed by the wise one, who is no longer deluded and who knows his real Self. His actions are free, from the desires of fruits and his fire of knowledge has destroyed all the effects of his past karma. He has conquered the dvandas [dualities]. And has mastered his senses. Though remaining in the midst of frenzied activities, his inner milieu is one of even mindedness such that nothing touches him, as Shri Krishna says about Himself in shloka 14.

Sanyasa that is renunciation. Renunciation of raga and dvesha, the two big boulders on the path of Self Discovery. Renunciation of attachment to the action and the fruits of actions. The highlight, of course, is yajnya bhava in performing all the actions, in such a way that they are oblations to the supreme and thus karma does not accrue.

Yajnya bhava is the main tenet of karma yoga in this chapter. The attitude of renunciation is taught as yajnya. Renunciation of Raga and dvesha, fruits of actions, desires, all amount to yajnya. The activities performed as oblation to Brahman (Tera tujhko arpan) are elevated from karma yoga to karma sanyasa. Knowing that there is only Brahman and none other makes karma sanyasa and Jnana one.

Immense shraddha in knowledge, leads one to liberation spontaneously.

Thus this chapter teaches us a short cut to liberation through karma yoga, the difference between Karma yoga and Jnana yoga simply fades. After all Bhagavad Gita is Moksha Shastra. Shri Krishna wills us all to attain Moksha fast and without fail.

Reflection and Exercises:

1. How do you feel about an avatar? What is Avatar vada?
2. Discuss shloka 14 chapter 4.
3. What is meant by non-action? Please give a complete answer using yukti.

4. *In this week how often did you remember the word JUHVATI and practise it. Please practice and answer.*
5. *What is it that you do in meditation?*
6. *Why is Gyana yagna superior to all others?*
7. *Why is Chapter 4 called Gyana Karma Sannyasa Yoga?*
8. *What is your understanding of rebirth; explain shloka 5 chapter 4 in detail.*
9. *What in you has changed from age 21 to date?*
10. *Why does even a wise man get confused about action? Sh. 16 Ch. 4 Please also refer to previous chapters and listen to your inner promptings.*
11. *What are the characteristics of the Karma of a Self-realised being from Ch. 4.*
12. *List the pairs of opposites given in the BG and give examples of how you can practise overcoming them.*

Discourse 5 - Karmasanyasa yoga - The Yoga of Action and Knowledge.

As we saw Arjuna was now keen to learn the teaching that Shri Krishna was revealing to him and determined to resolve every doubt that might arise within. Only Self-realisation dispels doubt totally. Shri Krishna has started with the Ultimate goal, the pinnacle of Knowledge to know what or who we are, while instructing Arjuna, and only then explains Karma yoga. Yet, in the immediately preceding dialogue, Shri Krishna has spoken of renunciation of action in many a shloka, and in the last shloka the Lord, once again, exhorts Arjuna, to engage in performance of action. It seemed to Arjuna a contradiction, between the performance of action and renunciation, as it seems between motion and rest, the two cannot be accomplished by an individual at one and the same time. Neither have two distinct periods of time been prescribed, for their respective observance. Arjuna, therefore, thinking it to be his duty, asks Shri Krishna which of the two, should he undertake and which of the two is the better path. Shri Krishna once again resolves his doubt and in the following three chapters, explains many an intricate detail of Karmayoga and Karma sanyasa, which is the renunciation of action that happens after Vairagya[dispassion] is complete. It must be understood that the paths enunciated by Shri Krishna, are meant for the unenlightened, who aspire for Moksha, they do not in any way apply to the enlightened being, who is already liberated. Arjuna, therefore, has many doubts, which arise even as Shri Krishna explains one or other path. Herein, Shri Krishna tells Arjuna that it is the ignorant, who say that Sankhyayoga and Karmayoga lead to divergent results, for the fruit of both is the same. Without Karmayoga however, Samkhyayoga i.e. renunciation of doer-ship, in relation to all activities of the mind, senses and body is difficult to accomplish; whereas the Karmayogi who keeps his mind fixed on God reaches Brahma in no time. Renunciation of action- Karmasamnyas is not genuinely possible for the unenlightened, and it is wiser therefore to begin with Karmayoga, as explained in discourse 3 and 4. Only when the mind is tranquil and equanimous does it sincerely aspire to know 'who am I?' To encourage and direct Arjuna, to walk the path of Karma yoga Shri Krishna tells him it is only the ignorant, who think of these two paths as separate not the wise, and therefore he should focus on Karmayoga. Shri Krishna, then leads him onto the ultimate sadhana, of Dhyana yoga, which he begins to explain at the end of this dialogue and elaborates on, in the next. Selected shlokas:

Shloka 1

अर्जुन उवाच ।

संन्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि ।

यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ॥ 1 ॥

Arjuna said: Krishna you extol Samkhya Yoga and then the Yoga of Action.

Pray tell me which of the two is decidedly conducive for my good.

Arjuna asks Shri Krishna this because in the same breath Shri Krishna speaks of Karma yoga and the glories of Karmasamnyas, and then again asks him to get up and enter the war. Eknath explains that our mind wants to categorise every information it receives, and that is what made Arjuna want to know which is the better path for him to take. He further explains that Shri Krishna has extolled, the path of renunciation of action with Jnana, and also the path of selfless action surrendered to the Lord. Shri Ramana Maharishi exemplifies karmasanyas. Someone asked Ramana, why he was not doing anything, and he just chuckled. It was the experience of all those who went to him with many, many questions, worries and doubts that as soon as they were in his presence, all the baggage they had brought along fell away. On the other hand, Swami Vivekananda exemplified Vedanta, in the path of selfless action-Karma yoga, to the most practical degree. Most of us cannot even sit still where is the question of renouncing action? Similarly, with Arjuna his very nature was made for action, and Shri Krishna now guides him to perform action in the manner of yoga, to eliminate any suffering which might come and no sin accrues to him. Karmasamnyas means renunciation of karma-action, that when unaccompanied with knowledge is a farce. We are therefore warned by Shri Krishna to undertake Karmayoga, which is to be preferred as it is easier of the two and is not beset with the pitfall of hypocrisy. If followed in their entirety both lead to the same goal that of Moksha- liberation from bondage.

Shloka 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

संन्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ ।

तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात्कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥ 2 ॥

Sri Bhagwan said: The yoga of Knowledge and the yoga of action both lead to supreme bliss. Of the two however the yoga of action being easier to practice, is superior to the yoga of Knowledge.

Shloka 3

**ज्ञेयः स नित्यसंन्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात्प्रमुच्यते ॥ ३ ॥**

The Karmayogi who neither hates nor desires should be considered as an ever renunciate. For, Arjuna he who is free from the pairs of opposites is easily liberated from bondage.

Shloka 4

**साङ्ख्ययोगौ पृथग्बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।
एकमप्यास्थितः सम्यग्भयोर्विन्दते फलम् ॥ ४ ॥**

It is the ignorant [bala- childish], not the wise, who say that Sankhya yoga and Karma yoga lead to divergent results. For one who is firmly established in either, gets the fruit of both ie. God realisation.

Shloka 7

**योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।
सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥ ७ ॥**

The Karmayogi, who has fully conquered his mind and mastered his senses, whose heart is pure, and who has identified himself with the Self of all beings (viz. God), remains untainted, even though performing actions.

Swami Rama has said, before one can surrender the fruit of the actions at the feet of the Lord one has to be skilled in performing the action, which is possible only if the action is selfless. The path of action is an essential step for the path of renunciation. Confusion arises if the relationship is not understood. One cannot walk the path of renunciation if one is attached to the action and the fruit thereof. Karmayoga brings tranquillity to the mind, and only then can one make the right decisions and choices and genuine renunciation can happen.

Simple belief in what the spiritual leaders and sages say is not enough, one needs to experience the bliss directly. For this each and every one has to light his own lamp and walk the path trodden by the sages. Discipline and

purification of emotions is imperative for perfection in action, the fruit of which, can then easily be renounced, for no selfish motive is involved at all.

Eknath explains exactly in the same way that a purified Ego who serves with non-attachment does every action and yet no action attaches itself to him. He gives the beautiful example of villagers who carry goods on their head for selling in the town and when tired rest their burden on the parapets (athani) made by sliding it over, and after resting slide it back on to the head and walk on. The parapets are made at suitable heights. The Lord is like the parapet- leave the burden of Ego onto Him and walk lightly - nothing is considered one's doing - it is the Lord who does.

To my mind the key here is the identification with the Self, for then the rest is a given. The Ashtavakra Geeta comes to mind, the 4th verse says- Yadi deham pruthak krutya chite vishram tishthasi / adhunaiva sukhee shanto bandha mukto bhavishyasi // Meaning if you separate yourself from the body and rest in consciousness you will attain happiness and peace immediately and be free from bondage. So, if one identifies with the Self senses will no longer require to be controlled, they will automatically be subdued for one does not live for the pleasures they offer any more. Actions and emotions all get purified, and karma can no longer bind him even though he performs actions for the motive, the skill and the outcome are all ideal. Karma yoga is prescribed for the one who has not realised the Self as a means to imbibe Jnyan through a purified Buddhi. For the Self-realised being Karmayoga does not exist for only Brahma is real and jagat is mithya [exists as an appearance only] and he has gone beyond the Gunas.

Shloka 8 and 9

नैव किञ्चित्करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित् ।

पश्यञ्शृण्वन्स्पृशजिघ्रस्नश्नन्गच्छन्स्वपञ्चवसन् ॥ ८ ॥

प्रलपन्विसृजन्गृह्णन्नुन्मिषन्निमिषन्नपि ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥ ९ ॥

However, the Sankhyayogi, who knows the reality of things, must believe that he does nothing, even though seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating or drinking, walking, sleeping, breathing, speaking, answering the calls of

nature, grasping, and opening or closing the eyes, holding that it is the senses alone that are moving among their objects.

These two verses are intertwined. The Ego builds boundaries around itself when it is attached to material things. By sadhana the Ego is purified and the senses come under control of the Manas and the Manas under the Buddhi. The one who thus attains, performs every action with non-attachment thus, not performing any action - that is he does not take doer-ship which is surrendered totally.

There are two clear ways of understanding we are not the doers- by this word is meant the idea that "I" do this or that, takes for granted, that "I" has the free will to do so. The experience over years of vigilant looking is to the contrary. We actually are registering, what is happening and forming memories which seem as though they decide our next move! The very first way of dropping this doer-ship is through devotion- surrender all, literally all at His feet - the good, the bad, the ugly, everything lay it at the feet of the Lord and accept whatever comes, as the Will of God. (Kunti). The second way is to clearly see the Ego as fictitious, only the Truth as Real so then Who does? Even while doing the simple daily chores note who does? **The one I think I am or the one I AM!**

Shankara: The man who thinks of quenching his thirst from the mirage, will not, having known there is no water, resort to the same place for the purpose of quenching his thirst. This is a classic and wise example- for the Self realised Being can clearly see that the world is a mirage, and to go to it, for quenching their thirst for happiness is foolishness.

Shloka 10

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।

लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥ 10 ॥

He who acts offering all actions to God, and shaking off attachment, remains untouched by sin, as the lotus leaf by water.

For the man who is not self-realised to work with non-attachment, and to surrender the fruit of all actions purifies him and therefore he will not be bound by that action. Any action performed with total surrender and total

detachment and for the welfare of others, frees us from bondage and is like the lotus leaf that is floating over water but does not get wet. Attachment is not love- it is lust and addiction. True love is nonattachment and hence no bondage.

In Sanskrit and the shastras, the lotus is a symbol of divinity for it takes birth in the slush of the pond and rises above towards the sun, the broad leaf which is floating over the water does not get wet, symbolising that it is possible to be in the world but not of it. The one who surrenders the fruits of action at the feet of the Lord and performs his duties as an instrument of the Lord rises above bondage. Meaning thereby, that if the doer-ship is not taken, the result will not accrue to the sadhaka, he can then attain the Ultimate.

The one who acts as an instrument of the Lord and does every action for the well-being of all, actually is not taking the doer-ship at all, thus he is free from the karma that would otherwise bind him. Good actions or bad actions both lead to bondage, if, the Karta Bhava is adopted the Bhokta role has to be accepted- meaning you would have to experience the fruit of the actions you have performed. However, if you have surrendered the fruits of the actions- they can no longer bind you and you would rise above the mire of sansar like the Lotus, which rises out of the pond towards the sun the symbol of Truth, without getting sullied by the mushy water or getting wet.

Shankara: He offers all actions to Ishwara in the faith that I act for His sake, as a servant acts for the sake of the master. He has no attachment for the result, even for moksha. The result of actions so done is only purity of mind and nothing else.

Shloka 12

युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम् ।

अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते ॥ 12॥

Offering the fruit of actions to God the Karmayogi attains everlasting peace in the form of God realisation, whereas he who works with a selfish motive being attached to fruit of actions through desire, gets tied down.

Yogis perform their actions selflessly not attached to the fruit of their actions which are done with Love. Peace and tranquillity abide in them and joy

overflows. The one who is attached to results is imprisoned in his own web of action.

To act without a selfish motive is not an easy task- there lurks a certain ego in most philanthropic acts too. Yet, it is possible and can be practised. The first thing to determine is what kind of action am I undertaking, will it harm anyone just anyone at all, and if the answer is no, one should go ahead if not, it is better to live like a pauper than indulge in it-e.g. Selling cigarettes, alcohol, drugs. The next is to connect with the Lord - which is a source of inexhaustible energy within, for it requires great courage and vigilance and therefore energy, to watch over one's own thought, word and deeds. Meditation is the key to attain and tap the source. The man who is entangled in the results of his actions is forever restless, anxious and tense for he is hankering after victory and praise. The one who has surrendered the results of his actions, is at peace and totally relaxed for praise or blame, gain or loss, victory or defeat mean nothing to him. He has transcended the pairs of opposites.

Subtle are the ways of the ego and it is only with great diligence and vigilance that one can discern it's cunning. My humble test for this is - does the thought, word or deed create an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity or does it create even the slightest anxiety? Any element of anxiety, fear or restlessness is a sure sign that the ego is involved. Ego entails the presence of self- it answers the question- what is there in it for me? When I, me and mine are at all involved even in decimal points it will result in bondage. To rise above the pairs of opposites is indeed freedom and liberation. To explain further what Eknath has pointed to- in Vipassana we are taught what is samyak aajivika- that is correct means of livelihood. We are told not to indulge in anything, that would harm others, even to earn one's livelihood, or else, be sure to be involved in a collective retribution. No man is an island and lives in the matrix of both inanimate and animate nature. The action of one is bound to affect another. Let this be a wholesome act on your part and you will be free of any fear, anxiety - right there and then- no need to envisage a future, when freedom will be yours.

Grab every opportunity to do something for others with both hands for then you will not be anxious of the results be it praise or blame.

Shankara: The steady- minded man who, resolved “I do actions for the Lord, not for my benefit,” abandons the fruit of action attains peace called Moksha, as the result of devotion, through the following stages: first purity of mind, then, attainment of knowledge, then, renunciation of all actions and lastly devotion to knowledge. But he who is unsteady is led by desire and is attached to the fruit, thinking ‘I do this act for my benefit’ he is firmly bound. Therefore, O Arjuna be of steady mind.

Shloka 13

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।

नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन् ॥ 13॥

Self- controlled Sankhya yogi doing nothing himself and getting nothing done by others rests happily in God - embodiment of Truth knowledge and Bliss, mentally relegating all actions to the mansion of 9 gates- the body's 9 openings.

The nine gates referred to are the 2 nostrils, 2 ears, 2 eyes, mouth, and the organs of excretion and generation. Guards to these gates only let in the sense pleasures, which are fleeting, with the result that an ego which is masquerading as the self develops and one is made to believe that it is only the sense objects, which can give pleasure = happiness and one gets misled. The yogi knows this and is therefore able to bring the sense organs and the mind - ego under control, thereby, shutting the gates to destruction and attaining unalloyed joy of the Self- which is eternal happiness. In the city of life there are 9 gates, but the Yogi knows of the tenth gate from where he makes his exit at the time of death- the vertex or Brahmarandra. The yogi is not afraid of death for he knows this is not the end, it is a disconnect- what happens at death is that the gross body, conscious mind and breath end, while the subtle body and the causal body continue and take another birth. The person is afraid of death, of many things in life itself because he feels death is the end of all and this fear generates his karma, and they carry this misery over to the next life- Swami Rama.

To renounce - you do not have to renounce the world but the ego- which is the cause of misery. The ego can be got over by putting others before it and serving selflessly. The body is the city which has 9 gates and the inner dweller is the Atman. People who are clouded by the ego, pass out of this body without ever

meeting themselves, what to say of their relatives or friends. It is therefore, imperative that we use this conscious existence for the wellbeing of the other, who is none other than the Self-Eknath

Shri Krishna refers here to the Sankhya Yogi- he is one who is on the path of Jnana and therefore, is fully aware of his true identity which is the Atman residing in the city of nine gates. However, we who have this Ego formed of multiple desires arising from sense objects, and being deluded as to our true identity, are therefore, unable to renounce even a needle (after all we may need it some day). This attachment is due to our mistaken identity, therefore, we cling to that which is fleeting, while missing the inner awareness that we truly are. The key is renunciation to attachment, which stems from the ego which is the primary clinging to this body as self- from there springs all grasping and fear.

Shankara: Actions are either the obligatory duties [nitya karma], or arising on the occurrence of some special events [Nai-mittika karma], or those intended for securing some special ends and which are only optional [kamya karma, or those which are forbidden [Pratishiddha karma]. The man who has subdued his senses and renounced all fruit of actions and even actions themselves, such a man rests happily because his mind is calm and without worry as except for the Self all interests have departed from his mind. He rests in the body which has nine gates- seven in the head and the two nether ones for the passage of urine and faeces. He rests like a Monarch unlike the ignorant one who has identified with his body who may sit on the ground or chair! He continues to inhabit this city as long as his Prarabha Karma decrees.

Shloka 22

ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते ।

आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः ॥ 22 ॥

The pleasures which are born with sense contacts are verily a source of suffering only (though appearing as enjoyable to worldly minded people) they have a beginning and an end Arjuna it is for this reason the wise man does not indulge in them.

Contact with the objects of the world come in the garb of pleasure but only give misery- they can never lead to joy for their very nature is fleeting and once experienced, only leave you hankering for more, resentful, angry or fearful, and jealous. Is it not clear that the source of true everlasting happiness is not in the sense objects? The wise make sincere efforts to develop determination and devotion so that they may attain this joy in this life itself, why postpone to the next? Those who have not found this inner peace within, face misery at the time of death for they are deeply attached to the body and are unable to exit. The one who knows the Truth leaves the body as one drops a garment, for the fear of annihilation does not haunt him.

Fleeting pleasures cannot satisfy a wise man. The word Rama- means everlasting happiness and the goal should be to attain Him. The little pleasures satisfy only the one who lives on the surface consciousness and is ignorant of the possibility of Rama. The Gita is as valid today as it was over 3 millennia ago as the message is profound and practical.

My constant strife used to be “why are sages against fleeting pleasures? So what if they are fleeting, they do give a pleasing sensation, don’t they? Besides we are always exhorted to live in the moment!!” Obviously, I was living on the surface of consciousness. It is with maturity and wisdom dawning that I can now see how futile those endeavours were, to obtain pleasure from objects (objects are not just gross physical ones, they include subtle mental emotions such as praise, fame and the like). Pleasure is not joy and all sensual pleasure is accompanied with pain, in some form or the other. R.W. Emerson has said, ‘take what you like, but pay the price.’ We forget the price we pay and continue in the same fray- how puerile is that? It is after some experience of what might be possible that the phenomenal world no longer enchants or mesmerises. It can be seen through.

Shankara: The contact of a sense with its object marks the beginning of a pleasure, and their separation its end. Delights are temporary, occurring in the moment of interval [between its beginning and end] The man who possesses discrimination and who has realised the Supreme Reality, does not rejoice in them.

Shloka 27 and 28

स्पर्शान्कृत्वा बहिर्बाह्यांश्चक्षुश्चैवान्तरे भ्रुवोः ।
प्राणापानौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ ॥ 27 ॥
यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः ।
विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥ 28 ॥

Shutting out all thoughts of external enjoyments with the gaze fixed on the space between the eyebrows, having regulated the Prana (outgoing) and the Apana(incoming) breaths flowing within the nostrils he who has brought his senses, mind and intellect under control- such a contemplative soul intent on liberation and free from desire fear and anger is ever liberated.

These shlokas explain the sadhana to be undertaken. First the posture- asana is to be made still. Focussing the attention on the ajna chakra- the space between the eyebrows internally, is what is indicated not, the Trataka which is focussing the gaze at the tip of the nose externally. There are some Gurus who misunderstand this passage and ask the sadhaka to concentrate by rolling the eyeballs upwards while meditating. This will only result in a headache. Breath awareness and focussing the mind at the nostrils, helps to attain sushumna which will lead to a state of samadhi after diligent practice. When the mind, becomes one pointed with the awakening of sushumna, it turns away from the senses and sense objects, thereby, the control of the senses comes naturally, then the mind finds its way inwards. Such a mind is free from anger, fear and enslavement to the senses. All sanskaras are burned in the fire of knowledge, which arises, ultimately leading to union with the Universal Self- exactly like a drop of water unites with the ocean. Samadhi is the experience of the Truth and the sadhaka is overwhelmed with joy- ecstasy.

There is a reference here to what happens to the eyes in meditation - they naturally turn a little upward towards the spiritual centre- the third eye and a certain beauty come into the eyes from within. The breath also changes which slows down. In Hinduism and Buddhism, it is explained how the state of the breath is closely connected to the state of the mind. The word Mukta- means freedom- here is shown a method to attain freedom. He who has reached the unitive state has attained freedom.

There are five types of breath Prana/ Apana/ Udaan/ Samaan and Vyaan and 5 Upapranas Naga[belching clarity of mind] / Kurma[blinking]/ Devdatta[pervades body] / Krikala[hunger thirst sneeze]/ Dhananjaya[hiccough]

Almost every Hindu and Buddhist tradition initiates us into both breath observation and concentration on the Ajna chakra- the place where the third eye is understood to be. It is the centre for knowledge and therefore Swami Rama has indicated that once that is awakened, all our previous tendencies and latent impurities are burned to ashes. On deepening our practice and attaining one pointedness the mind becomes still and the sadhaka is transformed into a Siddha. Free then, of all sorrow and only overflowing with joy and love.

Shankara: It has often been said and will be declared by the Lord that Karma-yoga which is performed in complete devotion to the Lord and dedicated to Him, leads to Moksha step by step: first the purification of the mind, then Knowledge, then renunciation of all action[karmasanyas] and lastly moksha. And in these two shlokas Shri Krishna propounds Dhyana -yoga the proximate means to right knowledge.

Summary: So far, Shri Krishna first instructed Arjuna on the principle- ‘who am I?’ and then went on to expound Karmayoga and in detail talked about yajnya and the manner in which action should be performed. Shri Krishna then instructs Arjuna that he should surrender to an enlightened master and take directions from him to attain the goal. Once again Shri Krishna also tells him the difference between action, inaction and prohibited action and explains how an enlightened being is not affected by any karma as the ego is absent. Herein, once again a doubt arises in Arjuna’s mind, and he wants to know which is the better path for him to tread. Now in this dialogue, Shri Krishna has not only clearly advised Arjuna to choose Karmayoga, which is the better path to tread when not enlightened, he actually initiated, Arjuna into the practice of Dhyana yoga as well. As will now be seen Shri Krishna in the following chapters further explains Meditation and how it has to be practised. It is like having a bundle of wet sticks and trying to light a fire, we have to expend many a matchstick, before the wet sticks dry up- similarly one has to do sadhana for enlightenment to occur, when finally, the fire of knowledge gets lit the darkness of ignorance vanishes.

Important sentences from Shankara:

Karmayoga and sanyasa are inapplicable to the enlightened.

Karmayoga suits the ignorant better than Samnyasa

Samkhya and Yoga lead to the same goal

Karmayoga is a means to Sanyasa

A sage's actions do not affect him

A sage's actions are really no actions.

Karma-yogin is untainted by the results of his actions.

The blissful embodied life of a sage- in the city of nine gates

Nature is the source of activity

Wisdom is cloaked with unwisdom.

When that unwisdom by which the mortals are deluded is destroyed by wisdom the Self then as the Sun illumines all objects, so wisdom illumines the whole of the knowable supreme reality. Sh 16

The sage has no more births. The sage sees one in all beings Sh17 / 18

The sage is free from grief or rejoicing- Sh. 19

The sage's infinite joy. Sh. 20/21

The path to Nirvana is beset by two formidable enemies Kaam and Krodh- he who in this very life can overcome them alone is a happy man. Sh. 23

Realization of the Lord by Dhyana yoga- Sh. 26

Shri Krishna explains the method of Dhyana.

"What is called Nyaasa is Brahman; and Brahman is verily the Great." {Taiterya Upanishad 4. 78.}

The man, for instance, who thinks of quenching his thirst in a mirage, mistaking it for water, will not, after knowing that it is no water, resort to the same place for the purpose of quenching his thirst.

Reflection and Exercises:

1. *Why does doubt creep into Arjuna again and again even though he is an intelligent and receptive student?*
2. *What is your understanding of Samkhya yoga so far?*
3. *What does Purusha mean?*
4. *Are Samkhya and Karma yoga complimentary? If so, how?*
5. *What is your understanding of Dhyana? Have you experienced it?*
6. *What is your strategy to get over dvandvas?*

7. *What makes a jitatma see foe and friend, stone and gold alike?*
8. *What is your shloka which you will use as a mantra for life?*

*Refer to essay on **Karmasanyas** from the book '**Essays on Ancient Wisdom**' available on the same website.*

Discourse 6 - Atmasanyam yoga - The Yoga of self-control.

As one enters deeper and deeper into a cave it gets darker, cooler, more and more silent and mysterious. Such too is the teaching. It gets more and more profound and Shri Krishna with His torchlight shows the way. In the beginning the dark night of the soul happens when all seems futile and bleak, when one is despondent and clouded with delusion. The Guru then appears, to dispel the darkness of ignorance. He first shows us the lofty golden tipped peak of the Himalayas – ‘Know thyself’. Then he starts to unveil the many layers of dark silk that cover our very true Swarup! In this the first is Samkhya yoga – the most direct path but also meant only for those who are ripe. Then he shows us the easier to tread Karmayoga and its nuances in discourse three, this is because Arjuna gets confused, even as we would, when Shri Krishna extols the qualities of the Jnyani and so why not renounce the world, instead of engaging in this gory war. Shri Krishna now begins to conclude and talks about how this Knowledge got lost in antiquity and therefore, he had once again come to awaken mankind, and he thus revealed this most esoteric knowledge to his friend and devotee Arjuna. Once again Arjuna is assailed with doubt as to how could Shri Krishna be the one who taught Vivasvan? Then he is explained about the many births taken by them both, and an in-depth analysis of Karma yoga is presented again. Now Arjuna would like to know which is the superior path for him, and Shri Krishna explains it is Karma yoga because only when he practises renunciation of the fruits of his action at the feet of the Lord will he attain to the next step and that is of Karmasanyas which can also be understood as Vairagya. Shankara has said an action done whether interested or obligatory and disinterested must produce effect it cannot of course produce Moksha [Moksha is not a result of action -as it is eternal] Now one would ask then why practice Karmayoga? The analogy of wet sticks for lighting a fire should once again be recalled and we should remind ourselves again and again- we need to dry these sticks i.e. remove all vasanas, through sadhana, for the spontaneous combustion to happen- Knowledge will arise! It will be an event without cause!!

Dhyana is the eternal sadhana to attain the ultimate. Preparation is in previous chapters.

This discourse begins once again by describing a yogin and a sanyasin. The shrutis declare that the sanyasin is one who has given up the fire sacrifice and renounced all actions. Shri Krishna defines the sanyasin as one who has renounced the fruit of action not the one who simply renounces the fire

sacrifice and action engaging in austerities, as long he desires and expects the fruit of his action, whatever his outer garb he is no sanyasin. The Yogin is one who has given up the thought of reward, as a result is of steadfast mind for it is the thought of reward, which causes unsteadiness of mind. A man is considered Yogarudha- [established in yoga] when a man has renounced all Sankalpas [resolve to attain], is not attached to sense-objects and actions and has renounced all thoughts which habitually arise, for it is verily thoughts which give rise to desires for the objects of this world or of the next. Only then can he be called a sanyasin not just by renouncing the ritual of fire offerings and actions. So, the Yogin is one who practices Yoga -this may be Karmayoga or Rajayoga reaches the same goal as the Sanyasin, who primarily renounces. "Verily desire springs from thought and of thought yajnyas are born." Manu ii2. "Whatever forms the object of desire, that he wills, that he acts". Brihadarnyaka Upanishad 4-4-5.

How does one give up the dependence on the fruit of desire?

There are five levels of renunciation (Swami Tatatmanand)

- Karma sanyaas – giving up only action- the dropouts.
- Viddhi sanyaas - renouncing the rituals only.
- Karma phalatyaag- Renouncing the fruit of action
- Yajnya – offering even the action as a sacrifice to the Lord
- Kartutva sanyas- renouncing the ego, the doer ship of action.

To be able to give up dependence on the fruit of action requires one to rationally see that it only leads to bondage, and bondage ultimately is another word for misery. If we don't have a bigger vision of life, you can be very bothered by a little thing for e.g., we are upset with a person for his/her irksome behaviour, and we hear someone close to that person died, suddenly all bickering vanishes. This is how Sanyasta sankalpah happens when we increase our vision, smaller difficulties vanish, until such time that our vision is universal and that is when, no sankalpa remains. Sankalpa here means those thoughts which expect fruit of action and are far removed from renunciation. Sankalpa has many meanings it can also mean the sankalpa shakti – power of resolution which we all require to persist in sadhana.

Shloka 5

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।

आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥ 5॥

One should lift oneself up with one's own efforts and should not degrade oneself, for one's own self is one's friend and one's own self is one's own enemy.

Dependency on external means cannot help the sadhaka says Swami Rama. If he thinks visiting shrines and doing pilgrimages will be the means to find true happiness, he is deluding himself as he is still seeking in the external world- which is devoid of true happiness. For unfoldment and enlightenment to occur, he should be led to his inner light, which will guide him to himself. The Self alone realises the Self. After one has explored external means and discovered their futility to give true happiness he turns within. That day is most auspicious. A seeker must never allow himself to slip back into old habit patterns, once he is on the path. The inner light will guide him, sometimes he gets confused, but the Self will always show the way, for this he must trust himself. He who has conquered his lower self with the help of his Self is a friend to Himself. He is an enemy to himself if he gives in to past tendencies and does not follow his inner guidance. *There are some who project their own incompetence on others and refuse to take responsibility for their own actions, thus they are unable to help themselves.* Further, the one who has read scriptures and is guided by a Guru knows the difference between the lower self (mere self) and the Self and identifies with the Self, only then is he said to have made the right effort to lift himself up.

Ek Nath -No one can help us grow into knowledge we have to do it ourselves. The Guru can point the way, but we must walk the road. The first step is taking responsibility, for where we find ourselves, and not blame our parents, spouse, boss or fate! Once that is done decide to get out of the morass, you find yourself in, by your own effort. The other vital step is to stop **procrastinating** and just take the measures you need to, so that you can pursue sadhana assiduously. Finally, trust the Lord - in trusting the Lord we are trusting our Self for He dwells within us.

Mana eva Manushyanam Karanam bandha mokshayoho – Amrut Bindu Upanishad.

Swami Veda Bharati told us to learn this shloka by heart and he often said, “If you do not know any other shloka it does not matter, learn this and act on it.” It’s been a long time since I ever blamed anything on anybody, or any situation on “taqdeer [fate]” etc. To take responsibility for the situation one finds oneself in, is the first step to empower oneself to change it. There is a very good prayer which says- Lord give me the courage to change the things I can, the patience to accept the things (eg. Ill health- incurable disease) I cannot change and the wisdom to know the difference. That said- a moment’s reflection will reveal that if we put source outside ourselves, there is no way one can achieve anything we set out to do, e.g., we find people lamenting and complaining that fate, was against them or else they too could have realised their dreams, is a contradiction in terms. It is only when we take responsibility for our own creation, that we can get the power to change it, or else we shall remain helpless. We are often jealous of the success we find in others we rarely ever see the work that has gone into it. This is so even with the worldly life then what to say of spiritual sadhana. Swami Muktananda my first Guru always said: ‘Sadhaka to mein bana dunga siddha apne aap ban na hoga.’ {A seeker I can make of you, a seer you have to make yourself} It is an undebatable advice Sri Krishna is giving us lift yourself by your own effort, for you alone are your own friend and you alone are your own enemy. Take for e.g., a situation like an accident, or rape or financial loss happened - PB has explained- the event is fixed but your attitude is not, that is the only choice we have. The right attitude comes from within and it’s us who decide to look positively, or negatively. That then will determine the future action and accordingly fruit thereof.

With regard to spiritual progress too, I have found that unless we apply our own mind to it, no amount of Grace can surmount the ignorance. Unless we decide to eradicate it from within, it will not happen. We often find it in children; repeated admonishing repeated prodding does not work and then suddenly one finds the child correcting himself because “it came from inside.” The whole drama is in fact “inside.” Every external stimulus is experienced within and reprojected outwards - the illusion of an external reality endures, because of this mind’s space / time construct. When we do the pranayama

Bhramari we are directed to experience the sound within, only today, I realised that everything is within anyway, and so it seems dumb to go out there to correct, develop or evolve, all of which must happen within. Now, no one can enter your world- not your spouse, not your Guru only you reside there - who then can uplift you? You alone. There is another analogy I find extremely helpful- the mirror we look into, to see our image. When we don't like what we see we try to clean and fix the image! How laughable ain't it? We even beg the Guru to do it for us. A story is given at the end of the chapter to illustrate how we can lift ourselves out of an abyss with our own effort. *

Note on shloka 8: The yogi who is content within himself and yoked to the Self looks upon a clod of clay, stone or gold as equal. One would wonder how can this be so? They are all so different and each has a value of its own. To the one who has found inner contentment – a piece of gold is of the same value as a stone or clod of clay for what can it buy him? Fleeting pleasures of the world? Destructive cravings? Misery?

Shloka 9

सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनमध्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु ।
साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥ ९॥

He who looks upon well-wishers and neutrals as well as mediators, friends and foes, relatives and enimicals, the virtuous and the sinful with equanimity, stands supreme.

Similar to the shloka gone before here Shri Krishna elaborates that not only are material objects of equal significance to the yogi but even human relationship, in all its manifold experience is treated with equanimity. This is so because as Swami Rama says, the sage does not get offended with anyone who criticises or condemns him, his balance is never lost. He does not misunderstand someone because they do not follow him, for he is firm in his knowledge of the skill and path of Dharma that he follows. They treat saints and sinners alike, because they accept them as they are, they do not unnecessarily praise or hate. He does not favour the saintly person or be cruel to the evil. He has attained evenness and peace which is beyond virtue and vice.

Above all he sees the same Brahman pervading one and all. He also accepts that the level of awareness, is different in each individual. Recently, personally

I learnt not to blame myself for past events, for I realise as my dearest friend once told me just say, ‘that was the level of my awareness at the time and since then I have moved on.’ Like one would hardly get angry with a child if he hit you, for you know he does not understand. Yet we find in ourselves as we get older, we want and sometimes even insist, that at least our children learn from us and when they do not follow, we get offended! The Yogi insists on nothing – he knows ‘all in good time.’ After all Brahman is eternal but then so is ignorance, however, ignorance has an end and the earlier the better for me, I tell myself.

Eknath explains: one of the secrets of victorious living is found in the word-Samabuddhi, having an equal attitude towards all. In the supreme state of Samadhi- we see the Lord in everyone, because we see the indivisible unity which is the divine principle of existence. Eknath gives an apt example, he said he took his dog for a walk and on the way, they saw a jackrabbit. The dog barked at him, the rabbit hopped and went away. The dog looked up at Eknath as if to say- what a strange dog- his front legs are so short? And sure enough, the rabbit must have felt- what kind of a rabbit is that all his legs of equal length- how on earth can he hop? So too, each human is so different, why should one be judgemental. The supreme example of what an enlightened being feels is in the life of Jesus Christ. Even as he was being crucified, he said “Forgive them O Lord for they know not what they do.”

He is esteemed, who is of the same mind to all. He is the best among yogarudhas, these are directions for becoming liberated so says Shankara.

Shri Krishna now gives us the directions of how to practise Yoga.

Shloka 10-15

योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।
एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः ॥ 10 ॥

Living in seclusion all by himself, the yogi who has controlled his mind and body, and is free from desires and void of possessions, should constantly engage in meditation.

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।

नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ॥ 11 ॥

Having firmly set his seat in a spot which is free from dirt and other impurities with the sacred Kusha grass, a deer skin and a cloth spread thereon one upon the other neither very high nor very low.

Shloka 12/13

तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।

उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥ 12 ॥

And occupying that seat, concentrating the mind and controlling the functions of the mind and senses, he should practise yoga for self-purification.

समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।

सम्प्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥ 13 ॥

Holding the trunk head and neck straight and steady remaining firm and fixing the gaze on the tip of the nose without looking in other directions.

प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः ।

मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत मत्परः ॥ 14 ॥

Firm in the vow of complete chastity and fearless, keeping himself perfectly calm and with the mind held in restraint and fixed on Me, the vigilant yogi should sit absorbed in me.

Shloka 15

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी नियतमानसः ।

शान्तिं निर्वाणपरमां मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥ 15 ॥

Thus, constantly applying his mind to Me, the Yogi of disciplined mind, attains everlasting peace consisting of supreme bliss, which abides in Me.

In the first shloka the Yogin is advised to renounce the world and all his possessions and resort to living alone in a cave in solitude to aid his concentration. This is not possible, for the Grihasta and many others with commitments as well as lack of will, to do so. What should such aspirants then do? One can become a hermit in his own home for a prescribed period of time in the day, dedicated to the practice in the following manner. Is it ever possible to meditate immediately after an argument? So, like we have a preop assessment before we put the patient on the operation table, we need a

priming regime prior to sitting down to meditate. First of these would be to have a conducive, secluded, clean place, with the right seat and setting aside a particular time, such that no commitments drag our attention away. The early mornings are the most conducive, but the danger of falling asleep is real, so one should precede the sitting with gentle joints glands exercise and pranayama ensuring the wakeful state. In case you prefer the evening time that is fine too, it is said however, one should avoid meditation between 12 midnight and 3 am as the dark forces are in power then and the mind can become susceptible to them. We should start with a short duration and gradually increasing the time so that we enjoy the practice and not set unreasonable goals straight away. Finally, persistence and perseverance are the key.

From shloka 10 to 15 Sri Krishna has described the method to attain samadhi. The method of discipline, self-control and focus with one pointed attention [ekagra*] towards Samadhi is chosen by the Lord. For the aspirant who is sincere, guidance given, when diligently followed is sure to lead to the Self, the ultimate goal of human endeavour. Swami Rama has described the procedure to be followed stepwise. Shri Krishna is giving practical instructions to both the ascetics and people living in the world, on the method of attaining Knowledge of the Self. Shri Krishna explains the prerequisites: first one should have a burning desire to attain Samadhi (samadhi), then the following- a secluded specific place of even temperature, fixing the time of meditation either sunrise or sunset, right seat (blanket or kusha grass), right posture and breathing. Swami Muktananda used to tell us that chiti kiran [sparks of power] fall from your body, and the seat should not be shared with anyone, the field should be kept as pure as possible. Guru Gita says that a white blanket is the best seat. Besides the food intake should be sattvic and moderate. Without the preparation for meditation just sitting and closing one's eyes, is not conducive to attaining stability and stillness.

This practice is a pathway to self-purification and here atman is the mind. So, throughout the Gita, Shri Krishna is teaching us ways to purify our mind- first Karma yoga, now Dhyana yoga and later Shri Krishna will expound Bhakti. Why is this so? For the seat of ignorance is the mind and unless the mind is purified, it will not have the capacity to reflect Brahman. It is only a purified mind, like the full moon, which can reflect the sun best. As Shri Krishna has said it is the

mind that has to become your friend, so that it can turn within. What is turning within? The body cannot be turned inside out like a sock. What then turns within- it is the mind and the senses- what is meant by turning the mind within? Withdrawing it from the tendency to run outwards, therefore it is more conducive to close one's eyes or if kept slightly open to fix the gaze. In samadhi however, the mind ceases. What is that which gets enlightened? The intellect registers that the source of Chidananda – Consciousness and Anand is within, how futile it was to chase objects, for getting fleeting pleasure. That is why Swami Rama's Guru was against his dedicating energies even to music, because it is external and drags the attention out, although it might also turn you within, yet it is dependent on an external source. Whereas meditation like democracy is by the mind, for the mind and of the mind!!! So, Shri Krishna says sit on this seat and withdraw the senses and unite the self [self can stand for body, mind or whatever else it maybe you consider yourself to be] with the Self. The mind and senses have to be cleaned and polished – how does one do this? I remind myself of the following shloka in the second discourse:

ध्यायतोविषयान्पुंसःसङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।

सङ्गात्सञ्जायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥ 62॥

The man dwelling on sense objects develops attachment for them from attachment springs desire and from desire (unfulfilled) ensues anger.

I remind myself if my mind dwells only on Shri Krishna what will happen? I will be attached to only Him, then what will happen – I will become akaamah [desire free], akrodha[anger free] and the entire cascade could be avoided. To each mind a certain shloka might be most attractive, each one should select his/her own and make it a sutra for life, to remind oneself again and again.

Sitting in meditation with head neck and trunk straight seems easy but when one closes one's eyes slowly the body relaxes, the shoulders slump and the head falls on the chest and before long one may fall asleep. One has to straighten the spine again and again and concentrate on the object of meditation, till such time that one conquers sleep altogether. Another easier (tougher) way to break habit patterns is to go against one's will e.g. if one has a different opinion than one's spouse or friend or children, parents, anyone- one makes a super effort and looks at their point of view and even follows it- that way we can gain control over our self-will much faster than any meditation

technique [Eknath]. Shri Krishna's reference to the position of the eyes is also significant as the eyes reflect the state of mind lucidly- when one is tranquil and equanimous they have a special shine coming from within. The one who keeps his eyes on the Lord all the time, who practices meditation regularly with sustained enthusiasm, trains his senses and disciplines his mind, at last gets established in the state of Nirvana. The state of utter bliss and freedom, is possible, not after death but here and now. It is possible to live in the world and yet be established in the Self and see the presence of the Lord everywhere.

These shlokas, like Gurudev has said are a series, which explains the method of sadhana. As Shri Krishna is the Param Guru, Bhagvad Gita would've been incomplete without even a brief mention of the methodology of attaining samadhi. With dedication and persistence, one can turn the mind inwards and follow the most exciting journey- such that one has never imagined. For this initially a lot of coaxing and cajoling of the mind is essential as old patterns of lethargy and cravings for sense objects dies hard. Thus, a conducive atmosphere and fixed time become mandatory. Like we spend many hours studying the various branches for earning our livelihood, we must dedicate a similar length of time with even more one pointed attention, to attain the goal of life. When we actually start practising many obstacles come our way to test our sincerity of purpose, these are hidden ways the ego diverts our attention. BEWARE!

True happiness and sense of wellbeing comes only when the mind is united with the Self- it does not exist elsewhere. When the mind is outward bound (Bahirmukhi) towards the objects of the senses one forever feels a certain lack, craving or aversion. Yet, only when the mind is turned inwards (antarmukhi) and its obstinate tendency to run outwards is curbed a sense of completeness and tranquillity is reached.

Note: *Reminder: Five states of mind Kshipta [agitated/scattered] Mudha [dull, lethargic] Vikshipta [partially focussed] Ekagra [one pointed] Niruddha [fully arrested]

In the following shlokas from 19 to 32 Shri Krishna goes on to give the result of practice in the one who has attained and describes his characteristics in detail, so as to inspire us to aspire for that state and pursue the sadhana given.

Shloka 19

यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता ।

योगिनो यतचित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः ॥ 19 ॥

As a flame, does not flicker in a windless place, such is stated to be the picture of the disciplined mind of the yogi practising meditation on God.

In yoga sadhana samyama- self-discipline is vital. Discipline should not be considered a punishment, and non-attachment should not be viewed as implying indifference or carelessness. ***‘For fear of losing their little joys they do not want to discipline themselves, so is the case with those who use their attachments as crutches to gratify sense pleasures’ Swami Rama.*** The ordinary human not knowing anything better is dissatisfied and fearful but if he were to undertake even a little discipline and follow the instructions set in, he will find something far better than what he has left behind. The sadhaka must first learn to have a *one-pointed mind by focussing it on a single object, the breath is best for this purpose*, as it is closely related to the mind. Concentration is not the same thing as meditation and there are teachers misguiding students by directing them to meditation straight away - that may lead to a contemplative mood, but does not lead to meditation. One may ask how can an object of concentration lead to the Self? Primarily it makes the dissipated mind one pointed and subtle. To this is added a Mantra by an experienced Guru which leads to the inner silence. Following which the Mantra is only heard not recited, one sees the light in meditation which is what illumines this world. This light is *unflickering* and still, we perceive it when the mind is quiet and still.

When your mind is deep into meditation it is motionless and steady, like a flame burning bright without a flicker in a well-protected space. It does not wander and the peace that accompanies such a state is incomparable and passes all understanding.

The explanation of our beloved Guru Swami Rama has so touched my heart, I feel this is the true guidance which we must persist with. The breath is the key- it is always with us, and it is tangible, it is also known as the seat of the mind. The mind then becomes quiet and its restless nature which dissipates energy is brought under control. Gradually with one pointed attention the mind ceases, and meditation happens even for a short while- it leaves a taste such that practice becomes a necessity and finally effortless.

Shloka 22

यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।

यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते ॥ 22॥

And having obtained which he does not reckon any other gain greater than that and established in which he is not shaken even by the heaviest of sorrows.

In these last three shlokas Shri Krishna gives Arjuna the 'phala-shruti' the benefits attained, of the practice done diligently by the sincere disciple, as instructed in the earlier shlokas. It becomes necessary for the Guru to explain the state of mind that will follow and the landmarks on one's inner journey so that we may be attracted and encouraged to continue. Once we have attained stability in practice the Guru guides us further. Even though not expecting any result is what we have to learn, and often expecting a result of practice becomes an obstacle as well as leads to despondency, the Guru like the mother gives a sweet dish after every meal, he gives us the phala-shruti. Like in the shloka 19 Shri Krishna says the mind will become steady like a flame in a windless spot- unflickering. In the next shlokas he tells Arjuna of the completeness and boundless contentment, due to the experience of wholeness.

In this particular shloka Shri Krishna gives us the ultimate fruit of practice, it is almost as though we are striving only for this. Shri Krishna says, yam labdhva- having got that- so what will happen? Having got this gain there is no greater gain, why? Because even the heaviest [guru-naam] of dukhas- sorrows cannot move him or disturb his equilibrium. Here, personally, I feel that we can practise this state you may ask how? Once we know even theoretically, that this samsara is a play of Prakruti which the Purusha has designed through Maya

for the entertainment and learning of the Jiva, who is trapped in the game- we can make that intellect serve us in times of difficulty by taking the asana [posture] of a saakshi [witness] which we actually are, albeit we have not yet experienced the totality of this Supreme Knowledge. Thus, the study of scriptures becomes vital- what to speak of the Song Divine- beloved Bhagwan, Shri Krishna is instructing us right here. We sometimes feel that this is all very well for the realised beings and some great sadhakas, but for ordinary persons like us who are all tied up in knots- Maya it seems far-fetched, 'Lekin' meaning BUT.... THEREFORE, if someone dies, someone is sick, someone has an emotional breakdown- we feel sad and it is all very, very sad, but, but if we keep reminding ourselves of the Truth that it is a leela [play] of Maya specially so created, that we may experience the Truth and turn towards it- I ask does it not alleviate the sorrow? All participants agreed it does. After all Prakruti is made of 24 or even if we say 25 tattvas which are interwoven with the three Gunas, what an amazing play springs to consciousness? Is it any wonder we are mesmerised? Even so, this knowledge does set one free in little, little degree.

Following this Shri Krishna will give advanced practices such that will lead to the innermost chamber of our heart- the Self. It is therefore necessary that we pay intense attention to His instructions.

Advanced instructions:

Having renounced desires which arise from the thoughts of the world, without anything remaining such a mind which has conquered the group of senses, having brought them under control, from all sides with no space in between. {Bri. Up.4.4.5} *"Whatever forms the object of desire, that he wills, and whatever he wills that he acts."* And therefore, {Mahabharat Shantiparva 177-25} *"O Desire, I know where thy root lies. Thou art born of thought. I shall not think of thee, and thou shall cease to exist as well as thy root."*

Gradually, gradually [like Bawa, my father, used to say slowly, slowly catch the monkey] the Buddhi should be used, to become steadfast and stabilise in the Atma. At that time, there should be NO other thought whatsoever.

Methods for meditation:

1. The object oriented technique, takes the alambana [support] of a mantra or breath or deity.
2. The subject oriented meditation, i.e., Atmatatvaavalokanam [Observing the very Being- Self], and Nidhidhyasana is contemplating on the source of thought, the Mahavakyas or some sentence which points to the Truth.

Repeatedly bring under your control the running, restless mind, and make it without movement- prayer is when we talk to God and meditation is when we listen to God.

P

rashant manasa -Intense silence [the word shanta arises from the root sham- which means silence] The serene mind has no vrutti or ripple in the mind. Such a totally silent mind, experiences supreme happiness, which is the understanding of lacking nothing and never diminishes as it is not comparable or dependent on anything. And he is akalmasha- without impurities- the biggest being-Ego!

Shloka 29

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।

ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥ 29 ॥

Yogi who is united in identity with the all-pervading infinite consciousness whose vision everywhere is even, beholds the Self existing in all Beings and all Beings as assumed in the Self.

The way is to see the Lord in all beings. The story of Yudhisthir who arrived at the gates of heaven with his dog exemplifies this principle. He was explained that either he could leave the dog behind and enter or leave with the dog. Without a moment's hesitation Yudhisthir turned back, the dog metamorphosed and his father Yamaraj [the god of death] appeared, and was immensely pleased as Yudhisthira exemplified that, the realised beings they see Him dwell everywhere.

The reality is but one. As Swami Sarvapriyanand was explaining that a pot of clay is made of only clay. That it is a pot is a concept and an appearance alone, similar to gold ornaments they have no existence without gold. Thus, this Universe is a manifestation of Brahman, that it appears as the stars, galaxies,

humans, etc. etc., in no way detracts from the Truth that all is one. My own question has always been- how can a brain which is matter- think thoughts which are abstract? The only explanation is that they are made from the same “stuff” which has taken subtler and subtler forms. The illumined Mind -the Self realised Being, actually experiences this one pervading reality and therefore has no doubt that the world and the universe are but an appearance, almost like the analogy of the rope and the snake. If only we experienced this, all fear, doubt and misery would literally vanish into thin air!

In the following Shlokas Shri Krishna explains:

The yogi who has experienced the Truth is even minded in both, joy and sorrow, this does not mean he loses his sensitivity to the pain of others. Quite the contrary he feels the pain and misery, as though it were his own, but also gains the capacity to rise above it and be unaffected. Thus, he is not sucked into some black hole of no return. Being united with the Self nothing touches him, he sees how worldly pleasures are simply a cloak of misery for they are but fleeting. He is one who is standing on the edge between the human and the divine. The peace he experiences is immeasurable. The teachings have been given. Now Arjuna has a doubt:

Shloka 33

अर्जुन उवाच ।

योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन ।

एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात्स्थितिं स्थिराम् ॥ 33 ॥

Arjuna said: Krishna owing to the restlessness of the mind I do not perceive the stability of this yoga in the form of equanimity, which you have just spoken of.

This Yoga that results in samata buddhi, to perceive the same Atma in all. Aham na pashyami- I don't understand the sthiti- condition of perceiving the oneness in all, how can such vision be steady? This is not possible due to chanchalatvaat- fickleness of mind for e.g., bomb placers and the like, how can I ever perceive them as one with me?

Shloka 34

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम् ।

तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥ 34 ॥

*For Krishna, the mind is very unsteady, turbulent, tenacious and powerful
therefore I consider it as difficult to control as the wind.*

Shloka 35

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम् ।

अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥ 35 ॥

*Shri Bhagwan said- The mind is restless no doubt, and difficult to curb Arjuna;
but it can be brought under control by repeated practice (of meditation) and
exercise of dispassion (vairagya) oh son of Kunti.*

Arjuna is getting down to specifics now - he asks 'it is all very well for You to say control the senses and the mind but that is like asking me to catch the wind in my hand.' For he understands that verily what is asked of him is to defeat his Ego which is at the helm of affairs. When we sit down to meditate and take the name of the Lord- the mind runs to the pizza parlour, which indicates that the one in control is not us but the hidden entity ego. Even to say, 'I think', is a euphemism, thoughts think us!

Arjuna finds that Shri Krishna has pointed the Truth to him, but at the same time he finds it an almost impossible task, and lays before the Guru, this feeling of hopelessness, that has now overtaken him; for no one has been able to control the wind and the mind is as restless as the wind. In the Vedas and Upanishads, the mind is considered both an obstacle, as well as a means to liberation. In modern parlance we refer to the conscious mind alone, however there is a deeper unconscious mind where our latent tendencies lie hidden, and these come up especially when we are meditating- often one wonders where and why thoughts flood the mind just when we want to quieten our mind.

Shri Krishna too agrees that indeed it is so! The mind is restless and difficult to control, but with persistence, diligence and practise it can become one's friend

and will come under control. Swami Rama continues to explain that the sadhaka must practise Vairagya- nonattachment to worldly pleasures, for he should understand they are fleeting and can never wholly, eternally, satisfy his craving, and in fact, create only misery. The other reason man finds it so difficult is because of the habit pattern of running after objects, for sense gratification, which he has developed over many lifetimes.

Now Sri Krishna realising Arjuna's difficulty explains- indeed it is difficult to dislodge the ego which has taken hold of the mind. He calls Arjuna Mahabaho here, meaning the mighty armed one, whose arms can reach the heavens- and this is what is required to embrace all. Mahabaho, also implies strength and the might one would require to control the mind. It is not easy to ride over our selfish desires, and in fact annihilate them, in order to enclose each and every one in a loving embrace, but with patience and persistence it can be done. Eknath's advice - practice meditation regularly, repeat the mantra at every opportunity, put the welfare of others first and restrain your senses with moderate choices. Shri Krishna uses two words to overcome the restlessness of the mind- Abhyasa- regular practise and Vairagya- translated by Eknath as detachment from our opinions, ego, desires. We all have the same faults which we need to turn our back to.

We experience the restlessness of the mind almost all the time and most so when we sit for meditation. To some extent this is due to withdrawal from sensory perception, that makes the inner world come alive, so to say. If we persevere for a while, the rate of thoughts does go down and interspersed are periods of thought free mind. However, these are all preliminary stages, and it is often a great effort even to sit and then you are asked to persist? Is there an easier way? There are two- 1. Total surrender at the feet of the Lord and using one's time- entire time in remembrance- how is this possible we ask- well if you are in love can you think of anyone else? and 2. By clearly separating your thoughts from your knowing consciousness- we mean- the thoughts are known is it not? To whom are they known? Reflect contemplate- experience- that is called Nidhidhyasana.

Swami Tatatmanand: It is the chanchalatva of the mind – the first part was regarding seeing the oneness, now it is about the mind. Arjuna describes the

manas, as pramaathi- the mind goes on churning, balavat- forcefully, and hrudam- consistently [stubborn], the nigraham- control of this mind is sudushkara- is very hard to do, vaayoho iva- like control of the wind. If one were on a sailboat- one would like to control the wind, but can we? In this question there is a subtle humour- Shri Krishna taught in the last 20 shlokas and explained elaborately, how to control the mind and steady it in the Self- and now what? Was not Arjuna listening? Story of the Katha, [when a saint/pandit visits a village and reads a scripture -here the Ramayana] where a man was listening intently, and at the end of the Katha, the Pandit asks him, 'you attended so carefully I was impressed,' the man says 'but I still have one doubt?' The Pandit wanted to clear the doubt of such a sincere man, so he asked, 'who was the Asura [demon]? Rama or Ravana?'

Note from Swami Tadatmanand's lecture:

Shri Bhagawan says Ashaunshayam- Without doubt, but abhyasena [with practice] and vairagyen [with detachment] one can do so. Durnigraham[difficult to control] and chanchal [restless], is the nature of the mind but gruhyate- it can be grasped, Kaunteye by abhyasena and vairagyen it can be controlled.

Abhyasa means practice it can also, mean repetition. Shankara- says it is Chittabhuma- in the ground of the mind, a particular object such as mantra, breath, stanza should be kept and focussed on. Therefore, to keep the mind's attention fixed on the continuous repetition of the object, which is uninterrupted by other thoughts is dharana, which then leads to dhyana. Bring your mind back even if it wanders 50 times, as long as you bring it back, it is meditation, which only fails if you fail to bring your mind back again and again.

Vairagya- means dispassion- Shankara's definition is: drushta, adrushta, ishta bhogeshu dosha darshana- *looking at the seen and unseen defects, of one's favourite, pleasurable experience*, which one wants to indulge in e.g. if one wants to go to an expensive restaurant where reservations need to be made, and you are looking forward to it on a Friday evening. Look at it this way, all dishes may not be enjoyed, the bill is always exorbitant, the conversation may not be conducive and even if all went well, it finishes in no time! If one is meditating all this can be a distraction, the mind gets drawn out to the sensations of the body, to the desirable experiences one anticipates or the

emotional pain of some relationship problem. **The power of attention is the greatest power we have- if this valuable power is drawn out meditation is not possible.** However, if one is seeking the Divine- there could be no greater attraction and one should put a 100% attention on the object of meditation. How can any worldly attraction distract the one whose mind is fixed on Supreme happiness and liberation? Therefore, Vairagya becomes important, towards the objects of the senses, and the world.

In the Yoga sutras the same two words are used – Yogah chitta vrutti nirodha- the cessation of the activities [fluctuation] of the mind. The 12th sutra says with Abhyasa and Vairagyaabhyasam the cessation of the Vrutti of the mind can be done.

Yogasutras of Patanjali:

Sutra 2: yogashchittavrittinirodhah

Yoga is restraining the mind-stuff (Chitta) from taking various forms (Vrttis)

Sutra 12: abhyasavairagyabhyas tannirodhah

Their control is by practice and non-attachment.

Abhyasa has two syllables- Abhi meaning – face, goal, it also means repetition and asa- meaning to sit, asana. *Therefore, the practise implies sitting to face the goal in mind and for which one repeats the mantra and brings one's mind again and again to the object of focus.*

Vairagya or non-attachment can only be attained by blocking the Chitta Nadi- river of the mind field which flows in both directions- downward towards the ocean of sansar and repeated cycles of birth and death, and upwards towards – Kaivalya the One. The downward flow can be blocked by Vairagya- i.e to actually see the dangers of indulging in sense objects and where they lead, strengthening this discretion with Viveka- Viveka is the power of discrimination – the power to discern and by dosha darshana – one soon sees the defects in flowing downstream. Then with Abhyasa one can direct the flow of the mind field- chitta nadi towards Kaivalya- Oneness, liberation!

Shloka 36

असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप इति मे मतिः ।
वश्यात्मना तु यतता शक्योऽवाप्तुमुपायतः ॥ 36 ॥

Yoga is difficult of achievement by one whose mind is not subdued by him; however, who has the mind under control and is ceaselessly striving it can be easily attained through practice, such is my conviction.

Note: shloka 36- Asamyat [uncontrolled mind] aatmanaa and Vashya aatmanaa[one with controlled mind]- the one whose mind is not controlled and the one whose mind is well controlled. It is My contention that only the one whose mind is controlled can meditate! Talk of stating the obvious! [Tadaatmanand says].

Shloka 37

अर्जुन उवाच ।

अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतो योगाच्चलितमानसः ।

अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति ॥ 37 ॥

Arjuna said: what becomes of the aspirant who though endowed with faith has not been able to subdue his passions and whose mind is therefore diverted from yoga at the time of death and thus fails to reach perfection in yoga (God realisation).

Sometimes even after years of sincere efforts, the sadhaka does not make progress or feels he has not made progress, gets dejected and feels maybe he is not fit for the spiritual path. Such doubts do arise in the minds of all aspirants and Arjuna therefore asks- what would happen to such an aspirant? Would he be left in limbo, and have to start all over again should he die without achieving his goal? Arjuna asks a very natural question because we may not have the capacity to continue our practice for one reason or another, then all that we had done might go to waste.

After practising for some years, our senses come under control and when the mind comes under our control, a quiet joy springs, the ego then acts according to our bidding. Thus, all relationships become harmonious and appropriate. Eknath goes on to caution- never take short cuts and indulge in psychedelic drugs, to experience the joys of meditation, for then the very apparatus [our delicate nervous system] which would enable you to unite with your true Self, would be destroyed and meditation would become impossible.

Doubts are very natural on the spiritual path, for we are so used to getting acclaim and recognition for our efforts in the material world, we tend to expect something similar in the internal world. Like we are given a graduation degree and feel our efforts were worth it, there is nothing tangible about the success on the spiritual path. Neither can we show it to others that we have crossed these milestones, for it is not a study of objects but of the subject himself. For this reason, as many others, we need a Guru to guide and inspire and encourage us. It is sometimes very disappointing, as like everywhere else- when we meet some sadhakas prone to express their experiences such as seeing lights, getting visions, forecasting the future etc., and find no such thing happening to us. In fact, it is said that an aspirant may even get so dejected, as to see no ray of hope- termed as the dark night of the soul. This precedes the dawn and he must have patience and persevere. If he has read the Bhagvad Gita or has a Guru- he will be guided right. If the goal eludes him and he meets his physical death, his aspiration for union with God will also take birth, when he dons another body.

Shloka 40

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

पार्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते ।

न हि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिदुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥ 40 ॥

Shri Bhagawan said: There is no fall for him either here or hereafter for oh my beloved, none who strives for self-redemption (God realisation) ever meets with evil destiny.

Sri Krishna assures Arjuna that no sadhana is ever wasted, the sadhaka starts where he left in the past. Only a few aspirants attain in a given lifetime. It all depends, on the sincere effort and his readiness. In modern times psychologists are as yet at a loss to explain how unique traits are present in different individuals. They try to quite unsatisfactorily, explain it on a genetic and environmental basis. There are many recorded cases of reincarnation both in the west and east which prove the theory. The yogi himself can see the past with vivid clarity and has no doubt about it. Thus, the aspirant who has been a sincere student and made efforts in one lifetime finds a suitable family, and conducive environment to take rebirth, and continue his practise till the goal is attained.

The light is lit when the lamp, the wick and oil are in place. It is true to say that when a student is ready a Guru appears however, it should be understood it is the spiritual tradition which lights the lamp, for which the Guru is only a means. In Hindu culture and philosophy there is no such thing as damnation. All are children of God and will ultimately unite with Him. They may play truant or hide for many lifetimes but eventually unite with their source. So, Shri Krishna as if putting an arm round Arjuna says- no meditation is ever wasted, the sadhaka will start again, where he discontinued earlier. *A good way to reassure ourselves is to know that whatever the outward appearance and present state of evolution we are pure and perfect at source.*

Reaching the goal is not in our hands for the very attainment is in the transcending of the ego. It will happen when and how it is to. Ours is only to aspire. Has not Sri Krishna reiterated several times that only the right to action is yours, not to the fruit thereof. It is wise therefore to surrender at the feet of the Lord all fruit of actions, whether spiritual or material and relax [not the effort]. It is heartening to know from the Lord Himself that no effort, shall go to waste and that we take off once again where we left off. Swami Veda Bharati used to often tell us- why procrastinate what is so blissful to another lifetime? Be ambitious get there in this lifetime itself. Just to ignite the aspiration in us for ultimately it is Grace that does it.

Shloka 41

प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः ।

शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते ॥ 41 ॥

Such a person who has strayed from Yoga, attains the higher worlds (heaven etc.) to which men of meritorious deeds alone are entitled, and having resided there for innumerable years, takes birth of pious and prosperous parents.

Shri Krishna says there is no evil power that can make good actions vanish. The assurance of Sri Krishna to the disciple is that every effort towards self-realisation will bear fruit. Death is not the end of existence, there are many realms through which the semi-mortal body passes and takes rebirth according to its sanskaras which are safely stored, such that their culmination must happen.

Shri Krishna reassures Arjuna, who speaks on behalf of us all, that all the years of practice the sadhaka has done, will be kept carefully in the locker, and as soon as the sadhaka awakens to his sadhana, may be even in the next life, he is given the treasure to build on. The sadhaka is born in a family that supports his aspiration and he can continue till the goal.

From Shlokas 40 to 45 Sri Krishna allays the fears of Arjuna regarding the fate of the sadhaka whose sadhana has remained incomplete. Today there are many books on rebirth with case records and healing happening for incurable mental conditions in western literature- e.g. Many lives Many Masters by Brian Weiss comes to mind immediately. Yet it is hard to convince the common sceptic. ***To my mind I know this birth, let me make the most of this conscious experience and explore the possibility of freedom from fear and misery.*** However, Shri Krishna's pointers to life after death and beyond, console many a dejected spirit and infuse hope.

* The story of Alison: When we had gone to Washington to attend the FIGO conference the theme had been Violence against women and the speaker invited was Alison a South African white girl. She told her story: She was apprehended by two men as she tried to get into her car from the shopping mall, pushed into the back seat by one while the other drove away onto the highway. Somewhere on the way they stopped, and she was pushed off the road raped and stabbed even her neck was slit, she passed out. The two drove away. After what seemed like a few hours she came to and had to drag herself to the centre of the road to get some attention. She found that her head fell back when she tried to lift it, she held that with one hand till she found, that as she got up her bowels were hanging out. She held that with the other hand and mustered enough courage to lie in the centre of the road vertically, once again she passed out. One car passed her by, but the other car stopped. A young man got out and spread his coat over her naked body and called for an ambulance, holding her hand he kept saying 'you will make it.' The ambulance arrived. She hoped he might get in with her, he did. At the hospital she was straight wheeled to theatre and after a 7-hour surgery she was in the ICU for several days till she recovered. On the second day the police came to interrogate her. She was the daughter of a single parent, and her mother always told her 'Alison you are special.' Even as her assailants were holding her, she

had noted the brand of cigarettes, the tattoos on their arms and what they looked like. The description led the police to apprehend them and as the police handcuffed them saying “you are being arrested for attempt to murder,” one of them blurted out ‘attempt?’ That sealed the case. They pleaded guilty saying Satan had entered them; however, the judge gave them life imprisonment.

Now, Alison went into depression she put on weight and could not cope with the shock. She was reminded of what her mother said, ‘Alison you are special’. Alison now tells the bright side of the story and explained what the ABC of life is. After six months of moping around she decided she had to gather herself together and face the world. As she recalls, A is attitude – her attitude to fight against all odds and drag her body to the road, while her mind cried ‘you have only a 2 % chance of making it, 98% you will drop dead on the way.’ It was just the 2% belief that propelled her to the place her body in the middle of the road, she asked us “if I had 100% belief what then could I not do?” That is what brought her out of depression and then she had a choice either to be depressed and drug dependent or work towards the safety of women and that’s what she did! She concluded the ABC of life is Attitude, Belief and Choice, the audience rose to their feet, many had tears rolling down, applauding her for giving us the key to life!

Summary: *This chapter is all about the sadhaka, sadhana (spiritual practice) and the siddha (one who has attained). It felt essential that we study the theory of Sankhya and Yoga which are time and again explained by Shri Krishna so that the context and practice can be better understood.*

In the initial shlokas of this chapter also known as dhyana yoga, Shri Krishna gives us step by step preliminary disciplines for Dhyana. He gives us practical tips on the asana, sitting posture etc. He also emphasises on moderation in food, exercise, sleep etc. Too much of any of these things are detrimental to meditation and will result in tamas only. Maintaining a balanced lifestyle is of utmost importance to meditation. The yogi having purified his mind and intellect through karma yoga and giving up his desires and perfected the preliminary disciplines is ready for advanced practice of meditation. The purpose of meditation which is to realise the Self is achieved through these practices.

From shloka 18 to 25 Shri Krishna expounds the last three limbs of Ashtanga yoga. Namely dharana, dhyana and finally samadhi.

In shloka 19 a simile of a lamp with an unwavering flame, in a windless place is given, for a mind in meditation. (यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता ।) A yogi's mind is not influenced by the 5 senses that is sight, sound, taste, touch and smell. He remains unaffected by the external influences and internal disturbances in the form of thoughts, emotions etc. His mind is in the ekagra or focussed state. And his full focus is on the Self or mantra like a stream of oil being poured.

Withdrawn and the restrained mind of a yogi is able to see/experience the Self and there is an Aha! moment for the intellect, that gets delighted. After experiencing this state, the yogi does not swerve from the Truth. Obtaining this wealth, no other acquisition will be superior to this (यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः॥) and not even the greatest sorrow will perturb him. (न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते)

Practising this yoga, gradually the intellect endowed with steadiness should make the mind fixed in the Self. Killing all the desires, the mind thinks of nothing other than the Self. The aspirant who has not attained even though sincerely doing sadhana, starts once again in the next life time, exactly where he left off. Shri Krishna assures us, this is the only bank balance one can carry with us!

Practical tips

1. Disciplined moderate lifestyle conducive to meditation.
2. controlling desires which are born out of imagination of the mind.
3. Focus on breath and bringing the scattered mind back to breath to gain focus
4. Taking the support or. Alambana of mantra and visualising God within us.
5. Vedantic meditation that is focussing on the subject the Self. For example, Aatmatatvavalokanam meditation guided by Swami Veda..
6. Mind which is naturally outward will turn inwards gradually with the help of steadfast intellect.

Reflection and Exercises:

1. *Translate shloka 5 of discourse 6 into daily life and give experiential examples.*
2. *Please elaborate the need for posture during meditation- shloka 13 discourse 6.*
3. *What is your understanding of Brahmacharya?*
4. *Define awareness. What is your experience of it? please experiment and answer.*
5. *What should be the daily schedule of a Sadhaka? And what is yours?*
6. *What are the advanced practices to further your meditation that Sri Krishna has given us?*
7. *Why is the mind restless like the wind?*
8. *How can anyone who knows someone is sinful be looked at with equanimity?*

*Reference: Essay on **Dhyana, Essays on Ancient Wisdom**, available on the same website.*

Discourse 7 - Jnana Vijnyana Yoga - The Yoga of Jnana and Vijyana.

As was indicated in the introduction it is the Mahavakya, Tat Tvam Asi that we see exquisitely laid out for our understanding in the song divine of the Lord. The Mahavakya was said to Shwetaketu by his father and Guru Uddalaka in the Chandogya Upanishad. Legend has it that even though Shwetaketu was a sincere sadhaka, he had to be instructed in the Mahavakya nine times, before it went home!! How much longer will it take us Gurudev?

In the first discourse Arjuna is totally paralysed by delusion and beseeches Shri Krishna to guide him. The next discourse is when Shri Krishna begins to instruct Arjuna on the Tvam principle. Shri Krishna primarily shreds Arjuna's notion of who he is and once naked of all upaadhis [body, mind, desires,] the Self, luminous and untouched is indicated in the shlokas 20-24 discourse 2. Shri Krishna then takes him through the path of Knowledge- Samkhya and Karmayoga explaining all the while, on how to remain equanimous, in any situation always identifying with the True Self and surrendering every thought [sankalpa] word and deed at the feet of the Lord. In the previous discourse Shri Krishna leads him through the discipline of Dhyana and talks about the Karmasanyasin.

It is now time to instruct Arjuna on the Tat principle and the following six discourses which include the Vibhuti yoga and the Vishwarup Darshan give a glimpse to Arjuna of the Tat principle.

In this the first of these discourses Shri Krishna introduces Himself to Arjuna! Such that we get a clear understanding of who Ishvara is, and through knowledge Bhakti just flows.

Shri Krishna begins with telling him to listen attentively, with the attitude of surrender taking refuge only in Him, to the knowledge, by which Arjuna will come to know the Lord without doubt. Shri Krishna continues that the experience of this knowledge shall leave nothing else to be known. The selected shlokas are presented.

Shloka 1

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

मय्यासक्तमनाः पार्थ योगं युञ्जन्मदाश्रयः ।

असंशयं समग्रं मां यथा ज्ञास्यसि तच्छृणु ॥ 1॥

Shri Bhagwan said: Arjuna now listen how with the mind attached to Me [through exclusive love] and practising yoga with absolute dependence on Me, you will know Me, the repository of all power, strength and glory and other attributes, the Universal soul, in entirety and without any shadow of doubt.

Shri Krishna begins now by introducing the subject of Ishvara in this discourse which will be elaborated on in discourse 9, 10, 11. Here he is telling Partha [Arjuna] just let your mind be attached [aasakta, not asakta which means not attached] to Me. Let us recall that in the preceding discourse the alambana, object of meditation, given to Arjuna, for advanced meditation and contemplation, was indeed the Lord Himself. So, Shri Krishna says, with your mind attached to Me and taking refuge in Me [aashrayah] listen so that you will come to know, My attributes in entirety [samagram]. This then is Ishvara the Divine principle which becomes manifest for us to behold and glorify.

Shankara: The yogin's mind is intent on Me, the Supreme Lord, possessed of such attributes as will be mentioned below. He practises yoga or steadfastness of mind and finds refuge in Me alone, the Supreme Lord. He who seeks a mundane end, resorts to some action such as Agnihotra, or to an austerity, or to a gift or the like, as a means of attaining that end. The yogin, on the other hand, resorts to Me alone, abandoning all other means with his thought intent on Me alone. Now, listen to what I am going to say such that acting in this manner, you will without doubt, know Me in full, possessed of infinite greatness, strength, power, grace and attributes you will know Me undoubtingly, the "The Lord is so and so only"

Shloka 2

ज्ञानं तेऽहं सविज्ञानमिदं वक्ष्याम्यशेषतः ।

यज्ज्ञात्वा नेह भूयोऽन्यज्ज्ञातव्यमवशिष्यते ॥ २ ॥

I shall unfold to you in its entirety this wisdom [knowledge of God in His absolute formless aspect] along with the knowledge of the qualified aspect of God [both with form and without form] having known which nothing else remains yet to be known in this world.

To comprehend intellectually and conceptually the knowledge imparted, albeit difficult, is not impossible, so now we learn about what is Jnyaan and Vijnyaan. What follows is the understanding I have come to regarding the same:

Jnana- knowledge of the Self, knowledge of Nirguna Brahman even deep intellectual understanding comes to be called Jnana. Jnana is that there is not One God there is only God. Some interpret it as the Knowledge of Nirguna Brahman. The Brahman from which the Universe arises, which is sustained by It and into which it dissolves

Vijnana- According to Shankara, it is the experiential knowledge of the Self. Some others also interpret it as the Knowledge of Saguna Brahman. Science is called Vijnana in common parlance, and this is so because it is the knowledge of the manifest universe- what is known as Prakruti in Sankhya. Even scientists are constantly seeking the Unified Theory which will explain the whole! It also means the Truth about Ishvara – Saguna Brahman or the one we, as individual units, can pray to, or hope to unify with. Vijnana is the way to bring Jnana into daily living- One who Knows the Truth has no other way but to share it.

Swami Rama says Vijnana also means sadhana that we undertake to understand Jnana

In Advaita Vedanta, the Jnana that is explained, can itself, lead to Vijnana because there is no journey to know the Self – like Nisargadatta Maharaj used to say- ‘My Guru told me I am not the body I am not the mind and I trusted Him!’ Thus, Vijnana happened. The three pramanas [means of knowledge]- of importance are Pratyakshya- perception with the help of the senses, Anumaan- inference- where there is smoke there is fire, and Shashtra- verbal testimony. This Jnana which we get from shastras is considered Jnana however in Advaita Vedanta the knowledge expounded, if truly understood, itself bestows Jnana and is thus Vijnana.

Shankara: And this knowledge concerning Me, as borne out by My own experience, I shall relate to thee in full. In the latter portion of the verse the Lord extols the knowledge which is going to be taught, with a view to prepare

the hearer follow it. He who knows Me in truth becomes omniscient. Thus, the knowledge is productive of great results and is therefore very hard to obtain.

Shloka 3

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये ।

यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेति तत्त्वतः ॥ ३ ॥

Hardly one among thousands of men strives to realise Me; of those striving yogis, again, some rare one devoting himself exclusively to Me, knows me in reality.

When Sri Krishna uses the pronoun Me as the Truth, he is entitled to do so as he is a fully enlightened Being, incarnate on earth for the redemption of the ignorant and suffering beings. The modern Gurus, who extoll themselves in similar terms, are only hankering after Gurudom and are misleading the students. (Swami Rama) Sri Krishna instructs Arjuna in the art and science of Truth, that dispels the darkness of ignorance. He states that the aspirant should set his heart on the highest, dedicate his whole life to the Lord, the Self of all. The aspirant should not allow his mind to get distracted and take refuge in the uninterrupted consciousness of Truth. Among the thousands who travel this path of spirituality, only a few, attain perfection. The first instruction in this chapter is to maintain awareness that the Self alone exists. It then goes on to expound Jnana, which is the Knowledge of the Absolute, and Vijnana the knowledge of sadhana to reach our goal, from this relative world of manifestation.

Many years before Eknathji started the Blue Mountain Centre for Meditation- he was giving a series of talks on the Bhagvad Gita and Upanishads. At the end of one of his lectures, when he felt the audience might be ready to receive a practical lesson in meditation, he started to guide the class. When he opened his eyes there were only three of them - his wife, the storekeeper and himself remaining! We often hear people saying we agree about the validity of spirituality, but we do not have what it takes, to walk the path. Undeniably it is hard work to sit regularly and meditate, to persist, one has to have a depth in one's longing. After all, achieving excellence in any field, requires total dedication. Sometimes even after our best efforts, we can get stuck in our

practice- this is when the need for a teacher is felt, who can skilfully drive us out of the cul-de-sac, we have put ourselves in.

Being blessed with the Grace of many an illumined Gurus, all I can say is not reaching the goal, would imply a failure and lack of dedication on my part alone. It is very clear to me, as I look back at the tremendous spiritual opportunities I let pass, that I was still enamoured of the mesmerising sansar. The determination, and dedication demanded for this ultimate goal is immense, I admit only a rare few have it in them, this then is evident in them while even in their teens. I am reminded of Kabir's doha which says "agge din pache gaye, Guru say kiya na het, ab pachtava kya kare jab chidiya chug gayee khet!" [Days ahead have gone past, what use now is lamenting, when the birds have destroyed the field.] No blame is due, of course, for that is the level of one's consciousness, at the time and that's all. Haven't we the assurance, of Shri Krishna that nothing shall go to waste, we start exactly where we left off. The only regret is we would have lost the opportunity this birth offers to see the end of suffering. Once again, the reassurance of Shri Krishna comes to our aid when He says, that "at the moment of death whosoever remembers Me shall verily come to Me." Therefore, no slack in concentration or effort now, may still get us in that fortunate situation, why lose hope?

Shloka 4

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।
अहङ्कार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥ 4 ॥
अपरेयमितस्त्वन्यां प्रकृतिं विद्धि मे पराम् ।
जीवभूतां महाबाहो ययेदं धार्यते जगत् ॥ 5 ॥

Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, reason and ego- these constitute My nature divided into eight parts. This indeed is My lower nature; other than this, by which the whole universe is sustained, know it to be My higher (or spiritual) nature in the form of Jiva (the life principle), O Arjuna.

These two verses are taken together to explain the two principles of creation as expounded in Samkhya philosophy. Shri Krishna is here explaining the fundamental constituents of creation. Shri Krishna enumerates what constitutes his lower self the ego, mind and intellect along with the five

elements [make up the body] this is what we end up identifying ourselves with. Yet, all of these are in a state of constant flux, changing every moment and therefore come under the realm of Prakruti, the universal energy flowing eternally. Prakruti itself is the cause of bondage, samsara. That which is still and immutable, eternal, infinite, imperishable, all-pervading is *Real* / Purusha / Universal Awareness- the observer of the dance of Prakruti. This is My superior nature it pervades the annu [minutest], and in the dehi [human form] it is the indwelling spirit called the Jivatma. This My superior nature sustains the Universe.

Quantum Physics has proven that no observation is possible without an observer. That is why there are koans in Zen Buddhism such as ‘what is the sound of the clap with a single hand?, If a tree falls in the forest, does it make a sound?’ All of these are meant to point to the observer, on contemplation – Nidhidhyasana ,one gets to experience, the state of pure observer- awareness with no content.

Shloka 7

मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किञ्चिदस्ति धनञ्जय ।

मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥ ७ ॥

There is nothing else beside Me, Arjuna. Like clusters of yarn-beads formed by knots on a thread, all this is threaded on Me.

Everything found in the external world has a unique characteristic and feature, and yet arises from the One source. But that source remains obscured from human vision. Sri Krishna addresses Arjuna, in the preceding shlokas, as Mahabaho, meaning one whose grasp has expanded to embrace the universe- only then can this knowledge be imparted to him. Taking the preceding 3 shlokas Sri Krishna is explaining that within the eightfold Prakriti (5 elements, mind, buddhi, and ahamkar) is residing the Divine element, this divine element is, as if, the string on which the beads of manifestation are woven. It passes through every subatomic particle or wave of Prakriti.

Here the Lord is only beginning to tell Arjuna of the glory and immensity of his creation. He will expound it in the next few chapters. Everything in the cosmos he tells Arjuna, takes its’ rise from Him and dissolves back into Him again. This is not a matter of Shri Krishna being here and creating over there, He is trying

to explain that the ever-changing world of time and space and energy (Prakruti), and the Changeless Reality that underlies it, are but two aspects of His divine Nature. Spinoza the seventeenth century mystic has said the finite world rests on the bosom of the infinite. Ramdas, a mystic of south India has said, "The world is God". Eknath says, even travelling on a beam of light, reaching the moon in one second and the sun in eight minutes, - and many light years, to reach the end of the galaxy, and millions of such galaxies, one would experience but a fraction of His creation. Astronomers have become humble and say, "this is what we know of the observable universe, what lies beyond we cannot say." All this left Eknath not "lost" in wonder but "found" in wonder. It is as though Shri Krishna the dark blue complexioned one is saying simply- "all these galaxies are but the garlands adorning My neck" and when asked "is it true? You really did all this?" He simply smiles and says "...this is only the beginning"

The particular translation of the shloka given above which says "Like clusters of yarn-beads formed by knots on a thread" conveyed a special meaning to me- note the beads are made of yarn(thread) and strung on thread(yarn)- which clearly points to the essential nature of the manifest universe being one with Shri Krishna (Brahman). Scientifically we are well aware that what seems solid to us is only an appearance, it is made of molecules / atoms and space whirling at dizzy speeds. Fortunately, our senses cannot gauge that or else we could not have perceived the world as we do. But we know that there are different levels of perception and different instruments for the same. Our senses work at a certain level the electron microscope at another, the telescope at a third level. What Shri Krishna is pointing at, is that perception levels are different, but the underlying Reality is One. Both the changing phenomenal manifestation and the underlying unchanging noumenal reality are One. It is only an appearance which mesmerises us! And when He says these are threaded on Me, he is only pointing to the TRUTH which He is and which we all also are.

Shankara: There is no other cause besides Me, the Supreme Lord: I alone am the cause of the universe. Wherefore, all beings as well as the whole of this universe are woven in Me, as a cloth in the warp, or clusters of beads on a string.

Shloka 8

रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभास्मि शशिसूर्ययोः ।

प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु ॥ ८॥

Arjuna I am the sapidity in water and radiance in the moon and the sun. I am the syllable Om in all the Vedas, the sound in ether and virility in men.

By pointing to the specific qualities of each element such as fluidity of water, fragrance in the earth, radiance in the sun and moon, valour in a brave man- what Shri Krishna is pointing to, is the fact that He is the source of All. There is a big difference between the word manifestation and creation, Swami Rama explains. **Creation is done with an external aid; however, manifestation is an unfoldment of inherent power.** This is what Advaita teaches. There are, no two, that is a mere appearance. The syllable Om is made of three alphabets- A U M and these refer to the waking / dream / and deep sleep state. (Mandukya Upanishad). The fourth sound is the soundless sound at the end of Om, which corresponds to a state beyond, and includes these three, termed the Turiya- simply the fourth, for it is not a state, it is consciousness that is present in the three states of the mind. This is the 'state' Yogis identify with, for they do not sequentially pass through these, they can experience them as the mind passes through the three states, themselves being the Turiya Avastha. As one advances in sadhana, identification with the gross such as body, mind drops and one's essential nature is experienced, and the truth of it being the same as the universal consciousness is understood. Manifestation comes into being through the three Gunas Sattva / Rajas and Tamas in various permutations and combinations.

Eknath recalls: 'on a hot summer day, in Kerala, as we used to run in after a game of soccer we eagerly drank water from the pitcher left outside to quench our thirst.' Shri Krishna says- "I am that sweetness of the water that quenched your thirst- nay I am also the heat in the scorching sun!" Thus, Shri Krishna is pointing to the unity underlying manifestation. Today even physicists agree that the Universe is a dance of light. It is also a symphony of sound. The sound that can be heard in deep meditation is the soundless sound of Om. The mantra is a word which when repeated innumerable times becomes a part of one's psyche and goes wherever one goes. The student then does not have to repeat it. It repeats itself- ajapajap. This is like getting a regular pay cheque after

retirement, the benefit of having worked hard for many years. The Lord abides in all.

We know the formula of water- H₂O and we also know that it exists in three states - solid liquid and gas, depending on the temperature it is set in. The formula is still just the One- this to me exemplifies the key to manifestation. The conditions (e.g. time, space) and the three Gunas are responsible for the appearance of shape and name, but the formula is only one- consciousness. Note if it were not so we would have to define an interface where matter and mind interact- on a lot of reflection, introspection and experimentation- such an interface is not found. It, therefore, becomes inevitable for us to infer that there is only just the One Reality- that is Shri Krishna- You and Me! {Advaita} Quantum physics has made this amply clear that no observation can exist without an observer, they are interdependent. This would not be possible if there were two separate entities. Sankhya, however, postulates two eternal realities – this too can be understood if we imagine a lamp and the electricity which are two separate principles, but both are interdependent for the light to appear in the lamp. The confusion arises when the lamp believes it is the source of light whereas all the while it is only the medium for light to express itself!

In the following three shlokas, Shri Krishna enumerates that He is to be found in the petrichor of the earth, brilliance in fire, the austerity in ascetics, the intelligence in humans, controlled passion and even all the Gunas, whether sattva, raja or tamas. Still Shri Krishna says, “I am not in them, they are in me”.

Shloka 14

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।

मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥ 14 ॥

For this most wonderful Maya (veil) of mine consisting of the three Gunas (modes of Nature) is extremely difficult to break through; those, however, who constantly adore me alone, are able to cross it.

Ya – that which is, ma- not so Maya is ‘that which is not’. This superimposed appearance or illusion is effectively created by the help of the three Gunas- sattva, rajas, and tamas. The three gunas create the illusory world which entices man to indulge in the objects of his senses. In the Ishopanishad there

is a prayer 'O Lord remove the glittering disc which has hidden the truth'. Thus, due to the combination of these gunas in different proportions each individual creates a self-image and tries to honour it, by wearing appropriate masks for the world. This behaviour usually results from insecurities within, on the other hand, Shri Krishna urges Arjuna to perform his duties and act wisely, as he is a leader and would otherwise entail confusion of the entire army, Swami Rama. This is not a contradiction in terms because he is asked to honour the truth of his nature, not some imagined self-image. He is further instructed to perform his duties selflessly, and to surrender the fruit thereof at the feet of the Lord. At no time in the Bhagvad Gita we are encouraged to renounce action, as a means to escape the wonderful Maya. When we study in depth, we find the three gunas create a trap that is difficult to escape. The yogi strives to develop his Sattva Guna so that the truth may be easily reflected, in his tranquil still mind.

How much the waves on the ocean, resemble the restlessness of the mind and how the surfers negotiate these waves, indicate the skill of the surfer / meditator. 'If I could explain what Maya means I could as well tell you the secret of life,' Eknath. It is said that the veil is woven with the strands of the Gunas- Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. Tamas creates the delusion of separateness; Rajas takes you for a ride to the razzle- dazzle of sense gratification. Only Sattva can still your mind and keep you alert. It is not what the eye sees that is perceived, it is what the mind sees that is perceived and so if the mind is still, calm and clear it may be possible to lift the veil of Maya.

It seems a cruel game of hide and seek to play- the Lord is hiding from view, and he has covered you with this veil of ignorance such that you cannot look beyond and to top it all, He hides within you! Anyway, who am I to judge the cruelty of the game the divinity lies within me too! The divine plays with the divine. Apparent separation and factual unison, leads to an almost impossible paradox to unravel. But Sri Krishna assures us there is a way out and that is hold steadfastly to the feet of the Lord and He will guide you through. Kabir has said in one of his dohas [couplets] that the sansar is like the two grinding stones, of a grain hand mill and our condition is like the grain that is being ground in between. His Guru Nipatniranjan, guided him saying "do not be afraid hold fast to the handle of knowledge of this mill, as I do, and do not wander away from

the same, but turn inward to the centre and you are sure to be saved,” grasp the feet of the Lord and you will escape the crushing. The aim of every path is to enhance, handle, develop Sattva guna in you and once it is strengthened, the power to focus, on the possibility that, this separation might be an illusion gradually happens. His Grace is boundless we just have to receive it. The story Shri Ramakrishna Param hansa tells is simply so apt. There was a businessman crossing a forest, three robbers accosted him, one of them said – let’s just kill him, the other said no, lets tie him to the tree and take all he has. Accordingly, they left him tied to the tree. The third robber came and undid him and quietly escorted him to the edge of the forest. The businessman was so grateful- he asked him to accompany him which the robber refused saying ‘I cannot come beyond these limits.’ The first robber is Tamas – who totally separates you, the second is rajas who is full of greed, the third is Sattva who can guide you to the edge- but then you have to go beyond these 3!

A beautiful story can illustrate the power of Maya. Narada is one of the greatest devotees of Shri Krishna and as they walked together one day, Narada, although already illumined, posed a question to Shri Krishna, “Lord” he said, “kindly show me how You are in the minutest atom and in the greatest star and yet no one is able to know You.” Shri Krishna happened to be in a good mood[!] He responded, “Sure I will let you in to My greatest secret, but first I am thirsty and can you get Me a glass of water.” There was a village nearby and Narada dashed out, to bring the glass of water for His Lord. The village was not as close as it seemed and in the scorching sun Narada was almost panting and exhausted as he reached the first hut and knocked at the door. The door was opened by an exquisitely beautiful young lady. Narada was bewitched and to cut a long story short he forgot all about his thirst and simply asked her if she would marry him. They were married had children and grandchildren and Narada was supremely happy, but time and tide wait for no man. The village was flooded by the waters of a river that jumped its bank and torrential rain. Narada lost his beloved and all he possessed; in agony he called out “Shri Krishna where are you?” The scene abruptly changed and a smiling Shri Krishna was asking him “did you get my glass of water?” Narada fell prostrate, before the Lord and had the first-hand experience of how man, forgets his source and wallows in this ever-changing fleeting world.

Shloka 16

**चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥ 16 ॥**

Four types of devotees worship me Arjuna, the seeker after worldly possessions, the afflicted, the seeker of knowledge and the man of wisdom O best of Bharatas.

Shloka 17

**तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।
प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥ 17 ॥**

Of these, the best is the man of wisdom, ever established in identity with and possessed of exclusive devotion. For, I'm extremely dear to the wise man who knows me in reality, and he is extremely dear to me.

Shloka 18

**उदाराः सर्व एवैते ज्ञानी त्वात्मैव मे मतम् ।
आस्थितः स हि युक्तात्मा मामेवानुत्तमं गतिम् ॥ 18 ॥**

Indeed, all these are noble, but the man of wisdom is my very self; such is my view for such a devotee who has his mind and intellect merged in me is firmly established in me alone as the highest goal.

All three shlokas are discussed together:

The first and second category of person who worships the Lord is the one in distress [aarta] begging for the distress e.g. ill health to be removed. The second or poverty stricken {artharthi} is the one who craves wealth}. He trusts God will help him. Although this is the lowest form of worship, he is still better than the non-believer. Swami Tadatmanand quotes his Guru as calling this type of devotee as a spasmodic one for he goes to the temple, prostrates before the Lord, has tears rolling down his cheeks and says "Lord, Thou art my only refuge", when he is in trouble or in need of something, once that has been sorted out, he forgets the Lord till the next event. Thus, his devotion comes in spasms!

The third type of person [jignyasu], wants to satisfy his intellectual curiosity and therefore explores the possibility of the existence of the Lord, making a diligent search, he is a seeker. Here, it is heartening to know that we fall into this category although it should not be limited to just twice a week and then back to the mundane- for then again, we would fall into the category of the spasmodic seekers! Only when the remembrance of the Lord is 24/7 that we become true jignyasu. Yet at least we are among the thousands who want to know among the 7.8 billion people on this planet!

The fourth type is the one who has experienced the Divine and has no desire at all. He is called a Mahatma and is full of wisdom. He knows this manifest Universe has arisen from the Truth only. All four types worship the same Lord, but the one who has known him, is the dearest of all to the Lord. This is so for only the Jnani is yuktaatma- in constant union with the Lord and recognises the Lord in all that he sees, the Jnani therefore, is in the perpetual embrace of the Lord unlike us, who occasionally, feel a warm embrace of the Lord.

One, prays sincerely for relief from suffering and wonders what cruel fate has befallen him/her. It is the grace of God that this suffering has come, for the Lord wants you to go beyond all suffering, He sends you suffering. The second, category is the restless in search for wealth. The third is one who finds something blocking his way, his is the greatest anguish as a spiritual aspirant. The fourth category, are those who have understood through meditation that which is beyond the mundane pleasure.

On shloka 17 Eknath has stressed on the word Nityayukta- ever joined to Shri Krishna and such a one knows Me in reality. Thus, Sri Krishna has honoured such a being, so as to encourage us on the path.

Shri Krishna the perfect psychologist has clearly categorised the people who seek Him. Those that beg Him for worldly gain are by far the majority, those who are afflicted with physical or mental (emotional) illness form the second category. This brings to mind the story of Kunti, a rare devotee, begged for afflictions, so that she may never forget the Lord. The third type are the jignyasu- the curious ones- it is said that the first requisite is, curiosity on the spiritual path. They are keen to know what is the meaning of life, is there anything like God at all? Shri Mooji has said - 'if you are curious you will find,

but only if you are desperate you will discover,' thus, it is not enough just to be curious, for the scriptures are vast and will whet any intellectual appetite, but the Truth has to be experiential to be discovered. Those who have gained that wisdom is the supreme category, says Shri Krishna, they know Me in reality He says. How intimate is this statement. Who can ever know Shri Krishna in Reality? They can only be, the Real.

Shankar: Of the four, the wise man, as knowing the truth, is ever steadfast, and devoted to the One, finding no other object of worship. Thus, he who is devoted to the One is superior to all others. Since I am his very Self, I am excessively dear to the wise man. —It is well-known to all in this world that the Self is dear to everyone. Therefore, as the Self of the wise man is dear to him. —And the wise man is My very Self, he is therefore very dear to Me.

The other three are all noble indeed, i.e., those three also are dear to Me. There is no devotee of Mine but is dear to Me, Vasudeva. There is, however, this difference: the wise man is excessively dear to Me.—Why so? —It is my conviction that the wise man is the very Self, not different from Me. The wise man strives to reach Me, firm in the faith that he himself is the Lord Vasudeva and is no other than He. He seeks Me only, the Supreme Brahman, as I am the highest goal to be reached.

At the end of many births occupied in spiritual regeneration as preparatory to the attainment of wisdom, the man of mature wisdom resorts to Me, Vasudeva, the innermost Self (Pratyagatman). —How? —Realising that Vasudeva is the I All. He who thus comes to Me, Narayana, the Self of All, is a Mahatman, a man of high soul; there is no other either equal to him or superior to him. Therefore, such a man is very hard to find; it has indeed been said that "among thousands of men, one perchance strives for perfection. Of thousands who strive one perchance knows Me."

Short note on next 3 shlokas: Those whose wisdom has been robbed [hruta] away by desires [kama], they seek other gods e.g. the one after wealth literally worships wealth [Goddess Lakshmi] and so on. This kind of prayer is limited when one is graced by the presence of the King what should one pray for? The King Himself. Yet when one is driven by desires, one goes through difficult rituals to gratify them. Accordingly, whatever they desire they receive – we have seen when one pursues wealth single-mindedly, and with faith [shraddha]

he certainly attains it. Shraddha is bestowed by Him alone- all is pervaded by Him alone, like in the dream world one may have many different temples- and people come to the temple of Lakshmi for wealth – who is the one who is being prayed to ultimately? – the Dreamer- Ishvara- Shri Krishna. The worshipper has the faith endowed by the Creator of the dream, after all. Shri Krishna is not critical of the aarta- afflicted or the Artharti- this reminds me of Sairam- He always grants you what you want so that you may want what he wants to grant you! Once the desires are fulfilled the right desire arises. The type of prayer may be Manasa [mind], Vachika [by word], Kayika [physical]- as this means an action – every action must yield a result therefore prayer must yield a result – if we do not get what we expect we think it has not worked? [a little distraction but one day I caught myself praying for a mundane wish to be fulfilled, so that I may be able to concentrate on Him- how ludicrous I realised instantly- am I going to tell Him what to do? Do I know more than Him? If I do, I better pray to myself! Since then, I always say- Thy will be done![wisdom has dawned].

Shloka 23

अन्तवत्तु फलं तेषां तद्भवत्यल्पमेधसाम् ।

देवान्देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता यान्ति मामपि ॥ 23॥

The fruit gained by these people of small understanding is however, perishable. The worshippers of gods attain the gods, while my devotees howsoever they worship Me, eventually come to Me alone.

Those who desire worldly objects, worship gods who fulfil these desires, but these are fleeting and then some other object is desired. In fact, the desire itself is the god they worship- if it is for wealth, then wealth and if for fame then fame, becomes the very god and their worship is rewarded. Yet it is always incomplete, men of this mentality are only worshipping from their lower self. The predominant guna acting in them at the time, deludes them, and they chase mundane objects. They get temporarily gratified, and consider this to be the right action, not ever doubting that the fruit is but passing, desires are insatiable. Because they have a form and they believe they are this form, they find it inconceivable to relate to the formless, attribute less truth. However, those rare ones who are wise and can see through the veil of gunas and believe in the formless one unity, they can experience the Truth within and verily they come to Me.

Every desire is a kind of prayer. If the desire is intense, it finds a way of getting gratified, if not in this lifetime the next. These worldly desires are petty, plentiful and changing- so those desirous of these, pray to the lesser gods, who are powerful enough to fulfil them.

Shankara says 'Aho, khalu kashtam vartate!' Oh, how unfortunate are they for with the same effort, they would attain the Lord Himself and end up with pittance instead!

These people attain to their respective gods. The one who desires the Lord Himself, during this lifetime or even at the moment of death attains the Lord who resides in one's own heart. To attain the Lord, one has to have faith, the key here is faith. When we go for a drive, we have faith the car will work, when we pay cash to the grocery man, he has faith the little green notes will work. Even scientists primarily have faith that their theory works- they then experiment to prove or disprove it. Thus, when Shri Krishna, the Buddha, Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Shri Ramana Maharishi are all telling us have faith in us, when we tell you the Lord dwells in you, we have only to trust their word in all its fullness. Experiment and follow our advice you are sure to find Him, they say. The Buddha tells of a man who listened intently to his lecture and asked- how do we know we will get Nirvana after following this most difficult eight-fold path? Suppose it leads us to a blind end and Nirvana eludes us after all these years of dedicated practice? The Buddha gently replied - Are there any mountains north of here? Yes, the man replied, the Himalayas. Buddha - How do you know, have you seen them? 'No but my uncle has and he told me.' The Buddha said: And you believed him, then what difficulty in believing in the One who is Nirvana and is leading you to it, Eknath. Thus, having deep faith in this shloka, the one who surrenders to the Lord verily reaches Him.

It is the experience of each of us that an intense desire does find its fructification. It is a fact that what we worship we get. Only the wise who has deciphered the ephemeral nature of this objective life knows what to desire for. This we term aspiration. So, if we aspire for the Lord, we are sure to find Him.

Shloka 24

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।

परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ॥ 24॥

Not knowing My Supreme nature, unsurpassable and un-decaying, the ignorant persons regard Me, who am the Supreme spirit beyond the reach of mind and senses, and the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, to have assumed a finite form through birth as an ordinary human being

From Swami Tadatmanand: Avyakta- unmanifest, vyakti manifest personality, apannum- attained or taken, manyate- consider, maam- Me abuddhaya- ignorant ones. The first line therefore translates as- the ignorant consider Me to be the One [unmanifest- avyakta reality] who has taken this form- personality. This is the very theory of Avatar- we understand an Avatar as the Unmanifest Reality which has assumed the form of a person. So, why then are we being called ignorant? This is so because – let us recall the dream metaphor- The Dreamer is having a dream which has many characters and He Himself is also projected in the dream. The characters in the dream are attending a Bhagvad Gita class with Swami Tadatmanand and they can grasp the dream Character of Shri Bhagwan. Shri Krishna is the Dreamer. We can even experience this Shri Krishna- we can get all the information we need of His birth, life and so on- but what does that at all tell us of the Dreamer whose dream this is? - Nothing whatsoever. Coming to the second line- param – the Transcendent - Bhavam – reality, ajaananto- do not know, mam- my, avyayam- unchangeable, anutamam- without a second or unsurpassable. What can these dream characters ever know of that which is beyond the dream- impossible, why? To put it in scientific terms- because it is in another dimension- it does not belong here. So can we experience it ever? No but we can have the Knowledge of it, It cannot be experienced for It is not an immanent (aparaa) reality it is a transcendent (paraa) reality. But we can know about it. Why can we not experience it? Yet, yet we want to experience it... how then? By BEING IT, By experiencing the entire Universe as Him- - not just the Shri Krishna but the entire, entire manifest Universe as having arisen from Him- That happens. Listen further:

Shloka 25

नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः ।

मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् ॥ 25 ॥

Veiled by My Yoga Mayaa – my divine potency, I am not manifest to all. Hence these ignorant folk fail to recognise Me, the birthless and imperishable Supreme Deity i.e., consider Me as subject to birth and death.

Swami Tadatmanand: na - not, aham - I, prakashah - illumined, known, apparent, sarvasya - of all, yogamaaya- samaavrutam - completely obscured. – first line reads- I am not apparent to them due to My Yogamaaya-which obscures me completely from their view. Mudhoyam - the fools Na- not abhijaanaati knowing, loko - people, maam – My, ajam- unborn, avyayam – imperishable. The second line translates thus- the ignorant know Me not who am the Unborn Imperishable. Here the term Yogamaaya needs to be explained in detail:

Yoga – means union, now union with what- with the three Gunaas which make up Maaya. How is it that He does not get deluded by Maya? When he is united with it? Just like a juggler does not get deluded by his own tricks, just like the magician is not deluded with his own magic. To further understand Maya let us go back to the snake/rope analogy- for which we need the help of Shankara- just no one could explain it better than he does. Satta means reality- there are three sattas:

- Paramarthika - Ultimate reality
- Vyavaharika - Manifest reality
- Pratibhasika - Projected reality.

So, coming back to the snake/rope analogy- in a dimly lit alley the rope lying seems like a snake and fear arises we raise a hue and cry and friends come- some experience the rope as a crack in the road, others as a fallen stick – so everyone does not even apprehend the same illusion! Until someone brings a lamp along and the rope is seen for what it is. The snake has disappeared as the ignorance of it vanished, but the rope remains. For a moment assume this manifest universe to be the rope and the fear it arouses in us, is due to our ignorance which when removed, fear disappears but the manifest universe does not- why? Because of Ishvara's Yogamaaya – the creative power of Ishvara to project this Universe from Himself, the Brahman which is unborn immutable imperishable. This is the Vyavaharika satta. The Pratibhasika satta- the projected snake on the rope disappears as the Avidya is removed but the Vyavaharika satta does not because it has not arisen from Avidya but Yogamaaya!!!- The creative power of the Lord.

Shloka 26

वेदाहं समतीतानि वर्तमानानि चार्जुन ।

भविष्याणि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन ॥ 26॥

Arjuna, I know all beings, past as well as present, nay, even those yet to come, but none devoid of faith and devotion knows Me.

In the previous shlokas Shri Krishna says His true nature is veiled from the deluded, by the power of Yoga Maya comprising of the three gunas. Only a few devoted beings are able to know Him. That Yoga Maya emanates from Me and hence cannot obstruct Me. Nobody knows Me, just from the want of knowledge of My real Self. The root is ignorance. Whereas I know all the past, the present and the future for time and space do not bind Me.

Shankara: My true Nature is veiled from those deluded by my Yoga Maya, but It cannot obstruct Me, even as the juggler is not deluded by His own tricks. Nobody knows Me except that one man, who worships Me and seeks refuge with Me. Just for want of knowledge of My real nature, nobody worships Me. The root is ignorance. It may be asked, "What is that obstacle to their knowledge of My real nature, whereby deluded, all creatures that are born know Me not?" Listen:

Shloka 27

इच्छाद्वेषसमुत्थेन द्वन्द्वमोहेन भारत ।

सर्वभूतानि सम्मोहं सर्गे यान्ति परन्तप ॥ 27॥

Oh! Valiant Arjuna through delusion in the form of pairs of opposites (such as pleasure and pain) born of desire and aversion, all living creatures in this world are falling a prey to infatuation.

ichchhā—desire; *dveṣha*—aversion; *samutthena*—arise from; *dvandva*—of duality; *mohena*—from the illusion; *bhārata*—Arjun, descendant of Bharat; *sarva*—all; *bhūtāni*—living beings; *sammoham*—into delusion; *sarge*—since birth; *yānti*—enter; *parantapa*—Arjun, conqueror of enemies

Almost everyone is infatuated with the pairs of opposites pain and pleasure / heat and cold / craving and aversion and are deluded by transient appearances only. Concentration on external pleasures leads one to pursue them endlessly, their minds remaining engrossed in sensual pleasures, does not allow them even to think of the underlying truth. The Truth is indestructible and timeless; the Lord is hidden behind His own power. To consider the Supreme One as having a form is to consider the undivided as divided. The sun, moons, stars, and space are mere aspects of and in the Lord, to consider Him apart from the manifest universe is ignorance. Yet for the one with a form, it is difficult to contemplate the formless, so it is appropriate to worship the Lord with a form, but ultimately one realises the Truth of the formless divinity in all. Swami Rama.

Life is a two-way traffic- we develop likes and dislikes, and all is well till our likes and desires are fulfilled, and the traffic is going our way but as is all too often the case traffic is also coming our way. The way we respond to this is by putting up huge signboards - No entry- all to no avail, because the rules of the land allow a two-way system. Instead of trying to make life fit us, it is wiser to accept and recognise the law of the land. In Kathopanishad we are taught two words- Preyas- that which is pleasing and Shreyas- that which is good. If we forever choose that which is pleasing because we like it- we are paving the way to self-destruction e.g. chocolate vs healthy fresh veggies. It requires self-discipline and some intelligence to overcome this tendency and choose that which is good. What is gratifying is that it is easy to develop a taste for that which is good and then there is no longer an effort to choose. Even 'tension' requires sustained practice to develop.

No one really likes being tense, but it becomes a habit when practised with diligence e.g. stubbornly holding on to one's opinions and trying to prove them right, instead of accepting and adjusting to our work partners and living harmoniously. If we train ourselves in indulging in actions of common interest which hold the attention of many- the days of the ego (separatist) are numbered- Eknath

During the ten-day course of Vipassana what comes home deeply is this: we are asked to observe our sensations and of course they may be either pleasant or unpleasant and we are warned not to react to them with craving or aversion. When this drama goes on for a few days one is able to decipher clearly the

proportion of aversion and craving our psyche is beset with. It is often a revelation. I had felt I have a great deal of craving within me only to discover to the contrary. One is taught systematically to observe and not react let it be as is, as is and develop forbearance. It is then pointed out that both of these sensations are transient. One realises this at the experiential level as we are not allowed to react to the sensations even at the subtlest level. Of course, it is the sincerity of the student that determines the insights. Once the fleeting nature of both craving and aversion is understood it becomes easy to let go. There is no longer a tendency to grasping or avoiding. Acceptance becomes a habit. Not that the ingrained habit patterns disappear but at least they are seen for what they are. Shri Krishna is telling us just this - those who do not have this special sight (Vipassna- special vision) fall prey to these pairs of opposites and no wonder strive only for the pleasant.

Shloka 28

येषां त्वन्तगतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणाम् ।

ते द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां दृढव्रताः ॥ 28 ॥

But those men of virtuous deeds, whose sins have come to an end, being freed from delusion in the form of pairs of opposites born of attraction and repulsion, worship me with a firm resolve in every way.

Most of us cling to our likes and dislikes and are unable to give them up because of the sticky ego, the sense of a separate self. This is like the cling peach in which the flesh adheres firmly to the seed, and it has to be forcibly torn off. The Lord has given us a double-edged knife to clean it- one edge is patience and the other is suffering. On the other hand, there are a few who are like the freestone peach- in which as soon as it is cut, the seed falls out and it is free. These few who have gone beyond the pairs of opposites- likes and dislikes and have only a thin layer of separateness - ego- they are truly free. Sri Ramana Maharshi has encouragingly said- no one has forced you to cling- you can give it up and be free, this moment. The more you gain control over your likes and dislikes, the freer you are. There are some people who rub you the wrong way- with them the thing to be done is to flash a torch light on their positive aspects and encourage those. Eventually you find they become endearing and even spread it to others. The one who has thus controlled his likes and dislikes by getting over his ego, will not get irritated but instead will put an arm round the

one who is obnoxious, and say “thank you, but for you how would I have ever learnt patience and forgiveness. How would I have ever been able to smash the ego?” So, says Eknath.

Most practical advice given by Eknath Easwaran. The shloka points to the end of sin which indicates total purity of emotion and mind. This is the result of Self-realisation and also the cause. This always perplexes me for it seems like a catch 22 situation. If you are not sinless you cannot attain, unless you attain you cannot be sinless! When this sort of paradox looms large in the mind’s eye - I simply surrender at the feet of the Lord and say: jaise bhi hain ab re Sai hum to tere hain [now whatever I am, O lord, I AM YOURS] and there is left, nothing to resolve.

Shankara: The very desire and aversion which are opposed to each other like heat and cold, connected to pleasure and pain occur to every being and are known as the dvandvas- pairs of opposites. Delusion occurs because when desire and aversion arise they create pleasure or pain and this delusion- is the cause of obstruction to seeing the Truth., the Self as the intelligence gets subjugated by these dvandvas. To one whose mind is subject to the passions of desire and aversion, there cannot indeed arise a knowledge of things as they are, even of the external world. All creatures coming into existence are born subject to this delusion and thus deluded it knows not that I am the Self and therefore, worships Me not as the Self. *Divine worship leads to realisation.*

Shloka 29

जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति ये ।
ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलम् ॥ 29 ॥

Shloka 30

साधिभूताधिदैवं मां साधियज्ञं च ये विदुः ।
प्रयाणकालेऽपि च मां ते विदुर्युक्तचेतसः ॥ 30 ॥

They who, having taken refuge in Me, strive for deliverance from old age and death, know Brahma (the Absolute), the whole of adhyatma (the totality of jivas or embodied souls.), and the entire field of karma(action) as well as my integral Being, comprising adibhuta (field of matter) adhidaiva(Brahma) and

Adiyagnya (the unmanifest divinity dwelling in the heart of all Beings as their witness), and they who, possessed of a steadfast mind, know thus even at the hour of death, they too will know Me alone.

Swami Rama has taken all three shlokas together. Perfection- Satchidananda (truth happiness and bliss) is possible for the one who performs his actions skilfully and with full devotion. He knows then that the worshipper and worshipped are one, like a drop is qualitatively the same as the ocean. He who has made sincere efforts to attain freedom, from old age and death, can achieve their goal. Ordinarily man is fearful of old age and death, having not understood the secret of life. The sadhaka however, who identifies with his essential nature is free from fear of death here and beyond for he knows only the body and conscious mind die. He is Eternal.

Eknath has explained both shlokas separately: (29) The witness principle within us is eternal- even the glorious Sun, will get exhausted and disappear but we who we truly are, will not. In samadhi the total withdrawal from the physical and phenomenal world clearly demonstrates to us that we exist sans the body. If that be so what is the body for? Eknath insists it is for as the Buddha has said- bahunahitaya bahunasukhaya- for the wellbeing of all, and for the happiness of all. My detraction from Eknath- It is to know the truth.

(30) As our practice deepens the unity of existence starts to become apparent within and true devotion springs. Here the words used by Sri Krishna - Adhyatma/ adhibhuta/ adhidaivam and adhiyagnya are technical terms which will be explained in the next chapter. The story of Markandeya comes to mind. A son is born to parents who were otherwise doomed to be childless, after years of tapasya [penance], a son is born, by the Grace of Lord Shiva on the condition that he will lose his life at age 16 years. The child, Markandeya, grew up singing the praises of Shiva and spent most of his time in the Shiva temple. On his 16th birthday he was told by his parents that it was the last day of his life on earth. He thought it would be best to sing the name of Shiva in the temple as his body was to go. Markandeya went into a deep state of Samadhi glorifying Shiva. The King of Death Yama duly arrived but was shown the trident by Lord Shiva who was guarding Markandeya and was told to withdraw, for only Shiva is known to conquer Yama. Markandeya is one of the chiranjeevis [in

body forever] on earth today, the other seven are Ashwatthama, Mahabali, Veda Vyasa, Hanuman, Vibhishana, Kripacharya, and Parashurama, figures blessed or cursed with eternal life who are believed to still roam the Earth.

It is particularly in old age and ill health that one desires to be free. This is also called shmasan vairagya - that is detachment arising, when death is at the door. Even this will do. Sri Krishna has reiterated throughout that even if the sadhaka takes refuge in me at the time of death, he will verily come to me. It is actually for this moment of leaving the body that one is preparing just as we prepare for our exams. It is equally true that if we don't prepare for it, we fail and will have to repeat the class! If one is intelligent enough and sees there is suffering and wants to be free of it, he strives to find a way and the easiest, is to hold steadfastly the feet of the Lord. Let nothing else distract you from Him. Non-attachment is not easy even for a sage, the story of Jada (inert, gross or tamasic or dumb) Bharat amply demonstrates it. Story told in the next discourse] The terms Adhibhut Adhidaivat and Adhiyagnya are explained in the next chapter.

Summary: *In this discourse titled Jnana Vijnyan yoga Shri Krishna explains to Arjuna what Jnana is – Knowledge and what is Vijnyan -application of Knowledge to this manifest Universe. Shri Krishna does this by first expressing how rare indeed it is that a person gets interested in seeking and how rare it is that amongst the seekers one finds. Shri Krishna then describes His Lower[aparaa] and Higher [paraa] Nature [Prakruti]. How through Maya this entire Universe, in fact multiverses arise from Him alone, how it is difficult, if not impossible, to penetrate this covering quite like the PPE kit, which shrouds man's intellect and leaves him grovelling in the mire of sansar. The rare one who sees through duality and drops all cravings and aversions knowing them to be of a fleeting nature, not conducive to true happiness, attains the Lord Shri Krishna. Finally, Shri Krishna adds a few terms like Adhibhuta, Adhyatma and Adhiyajnya so as to explain them in the next discourse! After all this is only the first discourse of introduction of the principle, TAT- that which is the Truth!*

Reflection and Exercises:

1. What is Jnana and Vigyan? How does Jnana help you in daily life.
2. Is there Ishvara or not? Who is Shri Krishna and who are you?
3. What is Maya? Why does Shri Krishna say it is duratyaya? shloka14

4. *Why is the true nature of Shri Krishna not known? Discuss shloka 28. When you reflect on the question please apply to daily life.*
5. *What are the advanced practices to further your meditation that Sri Krishna has given us?*
6. *What are you doing for Vigyan?*
7. *What is your understanding of Ishwara?*
8. *What prevents you from moksha?*
9. *What is your take? Is it enough to take the name of the Lord?*
10. *Define serendipity, synchronicity.*
11. *What is your experience of bhakti.*

*The reader is advised to read the essay on **Maya** given in the book '**Essays on Ancient Wisdom**' available on the same website.*

**Discourse 8 - Akshara Brahma yoga - The
Yoga of the Indestructible Brahma -
Abhyas Yoga by Sankara**

In the last discourse Shri Krishna threw a googly at Arjuna and no wonder Arjuna is bowled. He knows nothing of the complicated words in the last three shlokas and begins by asking the meaning of the terms he is unfamiliar with. Arjuna also wants to know the key to liberation as hinted by the Lord- 'even at the moment of death if the devotee thinks of Me, he verily comes to Me.' No wonder Arjuna would like to know how this is to be achieved what preparation goes into this mind state. Shri Krishna primarily explains the meaning of the terms and then elaborates, how at the moment of leaving the body, the devotee can think of Me. In Shlokas 7 to 9 Shri Krishna guides Arjuna, on practices by surrendering all action and their fruit to the Lord, keeping the mind fixed on the thought of the Lord alone and it will then happen quite naturally that one thinks only of Him at the time of passing.

The story of Jada Bharat illustrates this point beautifully. Our country is Bharatvarsha so called after the illustrious King Bharat. He retired to the forest after handing over his kingdom to his son so that he could now pursue spiritual practices. By his practise and tapas [austerity] he had attained an advanced state, one day as he was meditating by the bank of the river where a female deer was peacefully quenching her thirst he heard the roar of a lion, he opened his eyes to see the terrified deer leap across the river, in the process however, a foal was born and fell into the river. Sage Bharat rescued the foal and tenderly brought it up. Now he got entangled in the well-being of the growing deer and whenever it was out of sight for a length of time, he became anxious about the safety of the foal. Sage Bharat was aging and one day even as he was thinking of the deer, his call came and he had to leave his body. As he was thinking of the deer as he left his body, he was born a deer, since however he had done so much tapas in the past birth, he remembered his past. He kept close to a hermitage and attended all rituals and kept reciting mantras. This life also ended and he was born to a Brahmin in a village. He remembered even in this birth his past so he decided he would not speak to avoid any interactions, as he was determined to be liberated. His father loved him and called him Jada [inert] Bharat, the father passed away. The brothers and sisters-in-laws made him work and gave him his meals off and on. When the torture would become too much, he sat under a tree on the way side. He was well built and strong, it so happened the King Rahuguna was passing that way and one of the palanquin bearers became indisposed. The other three saw Jada Bharat and made him

carry the fourth pole. As they walked, they found Jada Bharat was jumping from one foot to the other, the king was being jolted. The king stopped the palanquin and fired this boy. Then he spoke “in spite of being a king you have no compassion I was trying to avoid little creatures on the ground who might die if I step on them.” The king was wise enough to recognise a sage. He took him to his palace and then Jada Bharat tells his story. The moment of passing is the single most significant one – if one can think of the Lord at that moment – one merges with the Lord.

Shri Krishna will also explain how the one who follows the instructions, and practises verily merges with Him. Towards the end of this discourse Shri Krishna tells Arjuna about what happens to those who leave their body in Uttarayan and those in Dakshinayan, this must have been the reason Bhishma waited for the Uttarayan after Makarsankranti [14.January every year] to leave his body. Now Shri Krishna feels Arjuna might be ready to hear, that mere ritualistic practices aimed at either material gain or heavens beyond should be transcended and one should take refuge in the Lord alone for else leads to bondage.

Shloka 1:

अर्जुन उवाच ।

किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम ।

अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदैवं किमुच्यते ॥ 1॥

Arjuna said: Krishna what is that Brahma(Absolute), what is adhyatma(spirit) and what is Karma? What is called Adibhuta (matter) and what is termed as adidaiva (divine intelligence)

Shloka 2

अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन्मधुसूदन ।

प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥ 2॥

Krishna who is adhi yagnya here? And how does he dwell in the body? And how are you to be realised at the time of death by those of steadfast mind.

Shloka 3:

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते ।

भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥ ३ ॥

Sri Bhagwan said - the supreme indestructible is Brahma, one's own Self (individual soul) is called adhyatma; and the primal resolve of God (Visarga) which brings forth the existence of Beings is called Karma (action).

Shloka 4:

अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदैवतम् ।

अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभूतां वर ॥ ४ ॥

All perishable objects are Adhibhuta; the shining (Purusha) is Adhidaiva, and in this body I myself, dwelling as the inner witness am Adhiyajna, O Arjuna!

All above shlokas need to be taken together as they are an explanation of spiritual terms indicated in the last chapter. Arjuna is naturally puzzled by these terms and while he asks for their explanation, he also pleads to Sri Krishna to tell him the secret, pertaining to remembering him at the moment of death.

Taking together the commentaries of Swami Rama and Eknath Sri Krishna is explaining to Arjuna thus:

Brahman is the imperishable, immutable, it alone exists in its own manifestation - the individual Self or soul is called Adhyatma. Brahman has two aspects - the manifest and the unmanifest. As it begins the process of manifestation it abides as the subject in all living creatures and is known as Adhyatma. The analogy given by Eknath is that the spider spins its own web through her own self she does not require to go and buy silk from elsewhere, similarly, Brahman manifests as Adhyatma in the individual. In the Chandogya Upanishad where Uddalaka is instructing Shwetaketu, his son, this is indicated by the Mahayavakya: Tat Tvam Asi- That thou art.

Adhibhuta is the objective world which arises from the mool Prakriti [seed Prakriti or primordial energy] the unmanifest aspect of Brahman. All that arises from the mool Prakriti is perishable and undergoes continuous change.

The universe, and this body which is subject to growth, disease, decay and death.

Adhidaivam is the divine principle in all manifestation, not human beings alone. This too is eternal. It is the very essence of every power in us.

Adhiyajnya is the subtle principle and process such as metabolic activity, happening in every body. Swami Rama has explained it as the continuous activity or sacrifice happening in the body at every level. Eknath says to reach the divine the sacrifice of the ego is required and every day in little things if you can go against any selfish desire, it is a sacrifice to the divine.

Notes: Terms get mixed up and need to be clarified.

Here is the sixfold explanation of Reality so that we can know God.

1. Brahman? - Used for the Supreme reality other terms from it are – Brahmand [universe], Brahmachari [celibate], Bruha- expanding. Aksharam (not affected by time,) Paramatma- Supreme (nothing beyond) and the Upanishads define it as Satyam Jnanam Anantam [Existence Knowledge Infinite]

2. Adhi-atma- swa bhava - as own's self- I consciousness not the I thought present in all 3 states. Brahman alone express as Atma. Inner witness who is awareness, the innermost core of our being.

3. Karma- from the Cosmic state- all Beings and five elements that which creates these, is called Visarg. Karma here, is the power to manifest. Bhagwan's Kriya Shakti- Bhuta {manifest world}, bhava {becoming}, udbhava {arising}. Other two are Iccha Shakti and Jnana Shakti.

4. Adhidaivatam- Cosmic Purusha- Ishwar- Saguna Brahma Hiranyagarbha- controlling the minds, of all beings of the Universe.

5. Adhiyajnya - is the individual jiva- the Atma identifies with the body, mind, personality and its actions. Bhagwan says I alone am there as the personality as well.

6. Adhi Bhutan - Constantly changing made from five elements- also an expression of the Reality. Kshara- decays and dies but is never destroyed

7. Prakarshena-yane- prayaan kale when we are not coming back- opportunity to know God - to drop all baggage along with the body.

Bhu- hava - that which is created - five elements.

Why does Sri Krishna make life so complicated with all these terms?

Whenever we explain even an object we describe the details of it - e.g. If I said brahman is this apple - if you had a curious mind you would like to know the details of what the apple is and I would tell you it has the following parts- stalk, peel, pulp, seeds - so that you become aware of what apple is. Therefore, Sri Krishna says it is formed of Adhibhut, adhyatma, adhiyajnya, adhidaivam, karma, and then he goes on to explain all of these terms. One more reason is that all this is a description of the Saguna Brahman, thereby showing that having faith in It also, you would attain to Him alone, for verily sarvam khalu idam Brahma- all indeed is Brahma.

Shankara: Brahman is the Akshara, the Imperishable, the Supreme Self [Paramatman] the Shruti says “O Gargi, it is at the command of this Akshara, the imperishable Paramatman, that heaven and earth remain, held in their places” {Bruhadaranyaka Upanishad 3-8-9}. The innermost Self, as the Pratyagatman, in every individual body is, the same supreme Brahman existing as the Ego- Adhyatma. The sacrificial act consists in offering cooked rice, cakes and the like to the Gods [Devatas], which causes the origin of all creatures, is known as Karma, for it forms the seed as it were of all beings animate and inanimate. The physical region – Adhibhuta is the perishable existence and Purusha or the soul the divine region- Adhidaivata. The entity concerned with sacrifice is Myself the Adhiyajnya- {is verily Vishnu – Taittiriya Upanishad}. That which gathers itself round the whole animated creation and is composed of the whole perishable existence. Everything that has birth is Adhibhuta.

Shloka 5

अन्तकाले च मामेव स्मरन्मुक्त्वा कलेवरम् ।

यः प्रयाति स मदभावं याति नास्त्यत्र संशयः ॥ 5 ॥

He who departs from the body, thinking of Me alone even at the. Time of death attains My state there is no doubt about it.

Shloka 6:

यं यं वापि स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम् ।

तं तमेवैति कौन्तेय सदा तदभावभावितः ॥ 6 ॥

Arjuna, thinking of whatever entity one leaves the body at the time of death that and that alone one attains, being ever absorbed in its thought.

Shloka 7

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च ।

मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मा मे वैष्यस्य संशयम् ॥ 7 ॥

Therefore, Arjuna think of me at all times and fight, with the mind and reason thus set on Me you will doubtless come to me.

The first two shlokas [5,6] are instructing us on the methodology of remembrance of the Lord at the moment of leaving this body. When one constantly thinks of worldly matters, has desires and fears one is most likely to dwell on the same at the moment of death. Therefore, it is imperative to make it a habit to think of the Lord at all time, so as to be ever absorbed in His name and when the moment of death arrives, one is not at a loss and can easily remember Him. The Guru Mantra is very useful at such a time especially if practised through life. It forms the vehicle which carries one to higher realms and away from sansar. If practised intensely, it enters into the unconscious and therefore surfaces when most needed. The breath is the connecting link between the conscious and unconscious parts of the mind and when at the time of disconnect the breath leaves, the unconscious part separates taking with it all the stored memories, desires and actions done in this life. If the unconscious is filled with the name of the Lord and one's mantra, it is sure to merge in the Lord. This is ensured by conscious repetition and reflection and contemplation on the Lord.

Most aspirants are not aware of the power of mantra repetition and expect results and experiences immediately, however, at the time of departure one can take nothing from here except our habit patterns- there is no heaven or hell- one lives on in these desires, which cannot be fulfilled as there are no senses and no sense objects so one has to repeat the cycle of birth and death. However, if one has practised assiduously and remembers his mantra, he is sure to be liberated.

Whatever we think about the most, whatever we labour for most, whatever we desire for most, that will be the content of our consciousness at the time of death. The Upanishads tell us that just as we experience the waking, dream and deep sleep state wherein our consciousness is at different levels so also after death it resembles the deep sleep wherein the ego is not existent. The desires lie dormant only to reappear when a suitable opportunity for rebirth presents itself. The Buddha has said “we are what we have thought” even **Meister Eckhart has said “whosoever constantly remembers God takes God to all places he goes, at all times, and God alone does all his work.”** Similarly, Shri Krishna promises each one if your heart is immersed in me you shall come to me.

Eknath explains the fight is in each one of us and is on 24/7, unless we are vigilant and know who the enemy is we shall be defeated- deep in the unconscious there is the first line of army- the infantry- FEAR then cavalry ANGER and then the elephantry- SELF WILL. Throughout the day, one needs to fight SELF WILL the most powerful of all enemies. Beginning with - getting out of bed, meditating, at the workplace, at home, with the neighbours, and with oneself- one has to battle for which one has to be constantly alert. When after such a fight, one sleeps with the mantra repeating itself, nature rewards us with fortifying our resolve and giving us strength for the battle next day. Nothing in the world can give greater satisfaction than this, one falls asleep in the arms of the Lord. When the time comes to leave this body, the Lord will keep His promise, and you shall verily merge into Him.

As an Obstetrician I know that when the baby is born and its chest is squeezed of all fluid mimicking an exhalation, it takes its first breath effortlessly. This is so because it has been practising for the past nearly five months in the womb. So, it should be that we practise for the moment of death too. We are most unprepared, is what the Tibetan Book of the living and Dying tells us. Unconscious as we are of the most certain event of life. It goes on to classify the different reactions, if the subject of death comes up: some don't want to hear of it, others say oh! Whatever happens to others will happen to us, only a few actually feel they need to prepare for death. From my experience of the neonate, I can say we should, if we are not already doing so, we should start now. The strange thing is we don't know when our time on earth will finish so

in all sincerity one should have started at birth - by that I mean since childhood. That is why proper conditioning of the child is so vital. It is also a common experience that what we dream of, is what we are afraid of, or what we think of most of the time. This is enough indication of the fact that our unconscious mind is imprinted with the action, word and thought of the conscious mind. Therefore, it is easily understood that we should strive to remember the Lord / mantra if we want that to be our foremost desire at the time of death.

Sh. 8: The wise person -yogi who learns how to apply Sushumna and incorporate the syllable Om attains equilibrium that can never be lost. Yogis remember that sound all the time. It has been praised by the Vedas. Sri Krishna is giving a practice of breath control at the moment of passing where the Sushumna has to be awakened. The human being is on a pilgrimage, and his goal is to attain peace and bliss, by constantly remembering the mantra he reaches a stage where the mantra chants itself- ajapa japa. At the time of death, he then attains his goal. One should consider every moment as a moment of birth and death and practise the mantra with the breath.

Shloka 9

कविं पुराणमनुशासितार
मणोरणीयांसमनुस्मरेद्यः ।
सर्वस्य धातारमचिन्त्यरूप
मादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥ 9 ॥

He who contemplates on the all-knowing ageless Being the ruler of all subtler than the subtlest, the universal sustainer possessing a form beyond human conception effulgent like the Sun and far beyond the darkness of ignorance.

The word Kavi is usually translated as poet- it also means the one who is wise, indeed the beauty of flowers, the creativity in a seed is such a stupendous poetry. This indeed is so. There is no end to the diversity and awesome beauty in the Universe. **The primordial cause is the Lord- we are but effects of this One.** He is also described as the Void. How much use is the contemplation of this Void he says, at the time of death? Whether we prepare for it or not, death is a certainty. So, devotion is the key- simply remember the form of the Divine constantly and do not carry any baggage of attachment so that you may easily

merge in Him at the moment of death and not suffer the rupture of consciousness, which otherwise happens to most of us. The fear too will simply disappear.

Taken from talks by Swami Nikhilanand:

The Lord has eight characteristics as follows:

The word Kavi is derived as follows- Krant darshinam. The one who knows all, is the meaning, consciousness is bound to know all for He is all- Sarvadnya.

Puranam (Puram api navam- though ancient always new) is ancient or eternal, Anushasitaram-supreme controller- (sarvasya jagath prashasitirah) also inner controller, by whose law - ruler no one can break these laws, law of karma and laws of nature [gravity etc.], anushasitara- compassionate ruler

Anniyam annuh anniyam- subtler than the subtlest, subtler than our mind, Buddhi also.

Sarvasya dhataram- nourisher of all beings, sustainer of all, giver of fruits of all actions.

Achintyarupam- beyond comprehension intellect cannot understand, it may get an inkling, but cannot comprehend can we catch space? The intellect can understand that it cannot be known, the dissolved ego gives place to I the Brahman

Aditya varnam - light of the sun, of the nature of light - consciousness, the sun illumines itself no need for any other source. We not only know what we know but also what we do not know. The sun cannot know darkness, but consciousness can know, both knowledge and ignorance.

Tamasah parastat beyond all darkness. When we understand these qualities of the Divine and contemplate them, our minds can be illumined. How to do this is given in the following shlokas- 10-13 Sri Krishna does not immediately reveal how this is done- Sri Krishna primes Arjuna by describing the understanding of Om.

Shankara: Sh.10 the sage is omniscient, the ruler of the whole world. Dispenser, who allots to all living beings, actions and their results, in all their variety. It is very difficult for anybody, to conceive of though, It exists. Like the Sun, He is glorious with the splendour of His Eternal Intelligence [Nitya -Chaitanya] which is beyond darkness of delusion or nescience [ignorance]. The strength of Yoga consists in the steadiness of mind, which results from the after-effects of

Samadhi. At first the mind [chitta] is subdued in the lotus of the heart [hrudaya-pundarika] then, by means of the up-going nadi – sushumna, after gradually obtaining control over the several stages of matter, [earth and the other four rudimental elements] the life breath of the heart is drawn up, carefully fixed betwixt the eyebrows. By this means the wise man, the Yogin, reaches the Supreme Purusha who is resplendent.

Shloka 12

सर्वद्वाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्य च ।
मूर्धन्याधायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥ 12 ॥

Shloka 13:

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन् ।
यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहं स याति परमां गतिम् ॥ 13 ॥

Having controlled all the senses and firmly holding the mind in the heart and then drawing the life-breath to the head and thus remaining steadfast in yogic concentration on God he who leaves the body departs uttering the one indestructible Brahma, Om and dwelling on me in My absolute aspect reaches the supreme goal.

Shloka 12 and 13 by Eknath: death was a word which was taboo in the west for a long time, recently however, there are many books available and it is discussed quite openly. Some advocate that one should die while enjoying sense pleasures, others feel what happens to those that die will happen to me. The truth is no one is convinced they will die or else they would do something about it. The Gita teaches how one should leave the body, such that the consciousness is not ruptured at the time of leaving the body. All the senses have ceased to function, the mind is withdrawn into the heart and so there are no memories, at this time if the yogi has done enough practice the mantra, (ajapajap) is all that remains and he will then merge with the divine. Most people who have not prepared themselves, experience the deepest suffering at this point when attachments, memories and desires, do not allow them to withdraw into their heart and the senses are no longer functioning. The physical pain can be mitigated but what can one do to relieve this anguish, which separates the person from all his accumulations? Thus, it is imperative that we develop love for the Lord and chant the name- given here by Sri Krishna

as Om which is the primordial sound or the soundless sound, experienced by the Rishis and brought forth by the Vedas.

Nikhilanand: One needs to know how to invoke Om by worshipping it constantly e.g. Tulsi leaves and plant how it is worshipped daily- proper reverence for it is required. Before plucking you take her permission. No food offering to God is complete without putting a Tulsi leaf on it. So, to chant Om one has to have deep reverence to invoke the Shakti in it, not just mechanically. Then it will reveal its beauty- shloka 12 further explains the beauty of Om - after controlling all gates- 9 gates to this body and mind, restraining the mind in the heart - steadily, deepest emotions felt there, then raising the Prana to the head - in-between the eyebrows, is the procedure. As we progress, the road gets revealed after walking on the path further and further like the torch lights only a certain distance. Om iti ek aksharam Brahma- just one sound which is Om- the most sacred mantra of Vedas. It is the Nirguna as well Saguna Brahman, it is the path and the goal. Mandukya Upanishad- is dedicated to explaining it - only 12 shlokas in it. A- cosmic waker (Vaishvanar) U -the cosmic dreamer (Tejas) M- Cosmic deep sleep (Pragnya) - the source where manifestation arises and merges. The silence following is the turiya avastha. Remembering Me through Om one who drops his Ego or his body, (Prateek sadhana- Om) attains the Ultimate goal. Each sound -mantra have their diety- devas, and when we chant with devotion the deva reveals the Truth.

Note: Take the name of God in Kaliyuga that is all that is required. If something simple is told we don't have faith and when given complex techniques we have faith but cannot do it.

Shankara: Those who understand the teaching of the Vedas declare the Imperishable as devoid of any attribute whatsoever. When Gargi the wife of Sage Yajnyavalkya asks him to tell her the secret of immortality he says, "The Imperishable O Gargi! Is declared by the knowers of Brahman, as not gross not subtle. The sanyasins ever controlling themselves, free from passion enter the imperishable, on attaining knowledge – meditate on the syllable Om till death, this is said in the Upanishads." In the Kathopanishad and Prashnopanishad Para-Brahman and the contemplation of Om is said to produce Moksha.

The Lord says in the shlokas 12-13 having closed all the gates, having confined the mind in the heart, having fixed his life- breath in the head, engaged in firm yoga, uttering Brahman, the one-syllabled Om, thinking of Me, who so departs, leaving the body he reaches the Supreme goal. Having closed all the avenues of knowledge and having concentrated thought in the lotus of the heart, and with thought thus controlled, he ascends by the nadi [channel] which passes upwards from the heart, and then fixing life-breath in the head, he utters the syllable Om the appellation of the Brahman and meditates leaving the body. The departure takes place by the Self leaving the body. No rebirth on attaining to this Divine Being.

The practises given in shlokas 10,11, 12, 13 are for advanced yogis and adepts. For it is quite impossible to imagine that ordinary mortals would be able to control the moment of their passing- for e.g. if one died in an accident what might be the words one utters? Would it not depend on what is our routine exclamation? If one had a painful disease- would we not beg for a pain-relieving drug which might fuzz the mind? Or as is most often seen now, most people die in a coma hooked onto a ventilator- what happens to them? Swami Tadatmanand gives a very apt example he says- if we turn a bicycle upside down and rotate the pedals the wheels move- and then we suddenly stop the pedal- the wheels keep on moving – this is so because of Momentum- similarly the karma we have performed during this lifetime gathers a momentum and even when death stops the movement of this body the momentum of Karma propels it into the next body. Not only so it will move in the direction that the momentum has determined. So, it is indeed a summation of a lifetimes action, that determines the end result, and the shloka should not be interpreted too literally, when Shri Krishna says – Prayan Kale – at the moment of death. It is also true to say, that one would quite automatically, utter or think of that which one is habituated to for a lifetime, at the moment of death.

Note: Shloka 14 says he who thinks of Me, the Supreme Lord long-uninterruptedly for a lifetime to that Yogin, who is ever steadfast in thought, am I easily accessible. This being so, therefore, without thinking of another, one should ever dwell steadfast in Me. And Shloka 15- having attained Me there is no rebirth for him. Then Shri Krishna explains the length of a single day of Brahma, is a thousand yugas and the length of a single night another

thousand yugas. The same multitude of beings moving and unmoving [e.g. trees], verily comes into existence at the beginning of a new day [kalpa] and goes into the unmanifest state, at the night of Brahma. Shloka 20 talks of the Unmanifest Being beyond both the manifest and unmanifest universe, that does not get destroyed at the time of dissolution. The Akshara – Imperishable is distinct from the Avyakta- the unmanifest. Akshara is distinct from the Avyakta, which in fact is Avidya, in which the multitude of beings lie in seed form. The Akshara does not perish when all beings from Brahma downwards perish. That is the highest goal and attainable, only by exclusive devotion. Shri Krishna then elaborates on the path of light and darkness, that is a soul departing during Uttarayana or Devayana [[when the north pole starts to tilt towards the sun, after Jan.14.], day and in the waxing half of the lunar month takes the path of light. The one leaving in Dakshinayana or Pitruyana [of ancestors], night time and the waning half of the lunar month takes the path of darkness.

Shloka 28

वेदेषु यज्ञेषु तपःसु चैव
दानेषु यत्पुण्यफलं प्रदिष्टम् ।
अत्येति तत्सर्वमिदं विदित्वा

योगी परं स्थानमुपैति चाद्यम् ॥ 28॥

The yogi, realising this profound Truth, doubtless transcends all rewards enumerated for the study of the Vedas as well as for the performance of sacrifices, austerities and charities, and attains the supreme and primal state.

In the ancient times as brought out in earlier discourses yajnya – sacrifice and charities were an important part of life, as well as to attain Swarga [heaven]. Austerities were performed for supernatural powers and also to attain Brahman. In this last shloka of this discourse, the instruction is not to fall into mere ritualistic practice [Karmakand], to attain ephemeral gains. Shri Krishna explains here that the ultimate aim of the direct experience of Brahman, far exceeds any of these limited joys and that, and only that should be attained. It is said once That is done, nothing else remains to do, once That is attained, nothing remains to be attained, once That is experienced, no other Joy remains to be experienced. To feel complete therefore, one needs to meditate and continue unabated sadhana, with perseverance and intensity. For this the Guru

is the ultimate inspiration. Here Shri Krishna is goading Arjuna to the highest goal. In the following discourse Shri Krishna will extoll the royal path following which Arjuna is sure to attain.

Shankara: Whatever fruit of merit is declared by the scriptures to be attainable when the Vedas are properly studied, when the sacrifices are performed in all their parts, when austerities are well practised, **beyond** all this multitude of fruits, rises the Yogin who rightly understands and follows the teaching imparted [by the Lord], in His answers to the seven questions, and he then attains to the highest abode of Ishvara which existed even in the beginning- he attains Brahman, the cause.

Summary: *Shri Krishna answers the 7 questions put to Him by Arjuna on what is Adhyatma, Adhibhuta, Adhijaynya, Adhidaiva, Karma, Brahma, and finally what should be the practice for the moment of death so as not to return to this mortal world of suffering. Most of the discourse is on the last question and Shri Krishna describes two pathways 1. For the advanced yogin and 2. For the likes of us engrossed in the mundane world- wherein remembering Him constantly would ensure that we remember Him at the moment of death and thereby attain Him. Shri Krishna then continues to tell Arjuna of what happens when the time of death is in the Uttarayana and the Dakshinayana. Shri Krishna concludes the discourse by the statement of how all Karmakand can be transcended by the one dedicated, who has fully understood these pathways. The take home message for me was sarveshu kaaleshu yogayukta bhava Arjuna- to me Yoga-yukta means the thought of the Blessed Lord – Be ever immersed in Him and your liberation is a given as at the moment of death the Lord Himself will embrace you!*

Reflection and Exercises

1. What is adhyatma? Shloka 3,4 chapter 8.
2. What is meant by prayaanakaale? How does one prepare for it? Please refer to shlokas 5,6,7,8.
3. What dies? What is reborn? Where does it go after physical death?
4. What is a Yuga? Elaborate on how ancients measured time.
5. Summarise discourse 8. What was personally important for you.

**Discourse 9 - Rajvidya Rajguhya yoga -
The Yoga of Sovereign Science and
Sovereign Secret.**

At the end of the last discourse Shri Krishna clearly indicates that even attaining heaven through rituals should not be the aim of the wise for this is a transient gain and one is back to sansar, ignorance and suffering! As we have said earlier the first 6 discourses are about Tvam - you, and these the middle 6 are about Tat- That. Shri Krishna is only just beginning to expound that all pervading Tatva – the impersonal essence that is the substratum of the Universe, in a most personal manner! Shri Krishna is simultaneously, subtly, inspiring Bhakti towards the Saguna Brahman. We have seen the Bhagvad Gita began with Arjuna's dejection and despondency, and the entire dialogue thereafter is meant to dispel it and liberate him from the bondage of suffering. In modern sports psychology, it has been observed that the pressure of performance, can send any sports person into a blank state where their faculties freeze- this is especially dangerous in gymnastics, therefore, they are advised to withdraw if they feel such a situation arising. The significant fact, about this observation is that the way out of this psychological block, is a dialogue with the mentor or therapist! Here we have an exemplary student Arjuna, who has the most relevant questions to help himself out of the abyss, under the guidance of none other than Shri Krishna. Discourses 9, and 10 do not commence with any questions from Arjuna, for Shri Krishna is now revealing to him the Truth of the underlying reality, which will liberate him from this mire of worldly existence.

This is the 9th discourse, we have come midway in the Bhagvad Gita now, we will see in the next two discourses the greatness of the Lord and in Discourse 12 Shri Krishna talks explicitly about Bhakti. Here Shri Krishna is introducing the mechanics of Creation and Dissolution and the cyclic nature of manifestation – sansar and Karma. Shri Krishna briefly indicates the categories of humans, those who have a fiendish and demoniacal nature, and do not recognise Him, and the others who have a divine disposition that is essential for liberation. These qualities Shri Krishna further elaborates in discourse 16.

In this discourse Shri Krishna is disclosing the most secret the most sacred royal doctrine of both Jnana and Vijnana for the purpose of moksha from sansar. So, pay attention:

Shloka 1

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे ।

ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्षयसेऽशुभात् ॥ 1 ॥

Shri Bhagwan said: To you who are devoid of the carping spirit, I shall now unfold the most secret knowledge of Nirguna Brahma along with the Knowledge of manifest divinity knowing which you shall be free from the evil of worldly existence.

Shloka 2

राजविद्या राजगुह्यं पवित्रमिदमुत्तमम् ।

प्रत्यक्षावगमं धर्म्यं सुसुखं कर्तुमव्ययम् ॥ 2 ॥

The knowledge [of both the Nirguna and Saguna aspects of Divintiy] is a sovereign science, a sovereign secret supremely holy most excellent directly enjoyable, attended with virtue very easy to practice and imperishable.

In the first two verses Shri Krishna is telling Arjuna who is endowed with the right attitude, he does not doubt[anusuya] his preceptor, reveres Him and is keen to listen, the sacred and most secret [guhyatam] Knowledge. Shankara says Jnyana is that by which liberation [mokshyase- will liberate] is obtained: Jnyanam Moksha prapyate iti sadhanam. And Vijnyanam is anubhavam yuktam sahitam meaning – knowledge obtained from experience. The Universe is the Saguna Brahman, the manifest form of Brahman and it can be experienced, that is called Vijnanam, it is also the experience of Jnanam -that knowledge by which liberation is experienced. Vijnanam in Hindi and common parlance stands for the subject ‘Science’ for it is Science which explores the Manifest Universe. Is this knowledge secret? Yes and No! It is proclaimed very loudly in the Bhagvad Gita, and is available to all and sundry – so how secret can it be said to be? Yet it is so, because hardly anyone understands it, unless instructed by an experienced teacher.

Raj Vidya- Of sciences it is the king, because it is of great splendour. Indeed, the science of Brahman is the most brilliant of all- notice how Shri Krishna is veering Arjuna away from Karmakaand [rituals for worldly gain], which leads to

but passing happiness. It is the greatest purifier [pavitram idam- this, uttamam-supreme] because it reduces karma to ashes in an instant, all the karma, dharma, a-dharma accumulated in thousands of births. What is more, it can be comprehended by pratyakshya—immediate / direct perception, like the perception of pleasure. Many a pleasure might be opposed to dharma, but not this knowledge which is not separate from Dharma. Thus, one may suppose that it is very difficult to attain- but here the Lord says- not so- Susukham very easy like the power of discriminating gems. Accordingly, it may also be assumed that if it is so easy to get- it might be as easy to lose- not so says the Lord -it is imperishable {avyayam}. Wherefore Knowledge of Atman is worth acquiring.

In shloka 3 the Lord says that the persons, having no faith in Me, remain in this mortal world. They do not even attain devotion to Me for they believe the body is Self. This reminds me of Nisargadatta Maharaj who when he was asked how long did it take for him to realise the Self and how did he do it? His answer was simple he said, “I trusted my Guru and what He said was ‘you are not the body, not the mind!’ I simply followed and in three years I experienced liberation.”

Shankara: Sakshat moksha prapti sadhanam- is Jnanam – that means which directly liberates is Jnana or Knowledge- why are we bound? Because we do not know our innermost core. Vijnanam- anubhava yuktam, sahitam- that knowledge which is experiential. Of sciences it is the king, because it is of great splendour. Indeed, the science of Brahman is the most brilliant of all sciences. You will be free with this knowledge from all that is inauspicious- ashubhat. The teaching is addressed to the mind and intellect; the ignorance has to be removed which takes time. This best of all knowledge is most purifying and all karma, dharma and a-dharma which has been accumulated during many thousand births, is reduced to ashes. It can be apprehended, by pratyaksh avagama - immediate perception, [accessible].

It is really easy [susukham], kartum- to do, it is not opposed to Dharma, in fact it is not separate from Dharma. It is the supreme- uttamam- that is when a knowledge purifies you forever- that is what it does! Dhaarayati iti Dharmam- That which sustains, upholds all. It is avyayam- imperishable – when you really get it you are transformed for ever. Nitya Shuddha, Nitya Buddha, Nitya Mukta is Atma- once this is known one is purified forever.

Shloka 3: Those however, who are demoniacal and have no faith in it cannot attain to Me, the Supreme Lord, i.e., they do not even attain Bhakti. They return [nivartante] to this path [vartmanti] of birth & death, samsara. Right attitude is one of the prerequisites.

This life of striving is like a treadmill, you run and run and get nowhere- the only way to find that eternal contentment is to get off the treadmill, your focus has to change – it has to become antarmukhi[inward facing].

Shloka 4

मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।

मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥ 4 ॥

The whole of this universe is permeated by Me as unmanifest Divinity, like ice by water and all beings dwell on the idea within me. But really speaking I am not present in them.

That which is self-existent, complete and full, does not require any support. The whole universe has arisen from just the one source, and all beings are protected and nourished by the same source. The source itself is independent and not bound to creation. As the air exists in space and moves about therein, so all things have their existence and movement in Him- Swami Rama.

The paradox that lies in the heart of the mystical experience is that it is clearly seen, that the Lord dwells in every atom but is in no way limited by any of these forms. We will be lost in wonder, when we see that He who cannot be contained by the cosmos, is contained in our heart. This is the mystery of Maya. Our business is to wake up.... From this illusion which we take so seriously, because it is real as it goes. One must find a way of living in the world without being of it and one must find a way to live in time without being swallowed by it- Eknath

This morning actually revealed how the above shloka is unbelievably true. As I walked on the terrace a gentle breeze, the silent breaking of dawn, the chirping of birds, the clouds covering the sun which still broke through a tiny shapeless window, streaming rays which looked more like the rays of the moon- I was

filled with a strange oneness and this body 'me' striding across the terrace with a will? Whose will? I asked. It felt all was indeed just one and yet, so many and what's more that which Is, is not limited by this appearance either, for it endures beyond time and beyond space. Is it synchronicity or serendipity that I am asked to express what I feel about this shloka today?

(It could be seen that the one "i" called "i" was only a conglomerate of memory, conditionings, desires and opinions which again fit into the recording system we know as memory- it surfaces and poses itself as "i" and of course every new experience, feeling, thought is added, to this conglomerate, which changes every moment. Paradoxically, it appears steady for all that has gone through this biocomputer is stored in this cloud awaiting easy access depending on the unique filing system. As the necessary memory comes forth it is presumed to be the self. This faculty is an absolute must for transacting in the world or else we'd be stranded, unable to pass through time or space and have no record of this dimension at all. The recording by some mysterious power (MAYA), assumes the place of the true I and even when this body falls, the cloud of memories and desires lingers on, till it finds a suitable biocomputer to enter into, and start playing the game all over again. All of this has the substrate of Brahman like for the mirage to appear the desert and sun are necessary or else the illusion cannot appear. Yet, the desert is not by itself the cause of the mirage and will exist even after the appearance disappears! What then is there to be afraid or sad about? Appearance and disappearance are the play of Maya I support it, so that it may dance on Me and She deludes Me, into mistaking the pseudo for the real. Breath taking game only the Divine can play with Itself)

[Swami Nikhilanand notes - jagat- ja- to be born, ga- to go, t- to stand- that which is born and keeps changing but seems to stand. In this shloka 4 principles are to be understood 1. I pervade the whole of manifestation. 2. Manifestation does not limit me- I still remain 3. I do not need manifestation to exist. 4. Only I am, there is nothing else, waves/ ocean/ water, sky/ clouds/ air.

Swami Tatadmanand says these 4 and 5 are the most significant shlokas in the whole of the text and therefore the most secret and sacred knowledge- the direct means for gaining Moksha.]

Shloka 5

न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ।

भूतभृन्न च भूतस्थो ममात्मा भूतभावनः ॥ 5 ॥

Nay, all those beings abide not in Me; but behold the wonderful of My divine Yoga; though the Sustainer and Creator of beings, Myself in reality dwell not in those beings.

Swami Tadatamand explains the above two shlokas most lucidly and in detail hence I'd like to insert his exposition of these shlokas here. It encompasses the definition of Ishwara as well as giving an insight into the undefinable Brahman. Let us take the shloka 4 first word by word-

Shloka 4

Maya- by Me; *tatam*—pervaded; *idam*—this; *sarvam*—entire; *jagat*—cosmic manifestation; *avyakta-mūrtinā*—the unmanifested form; *mat-sthāni*—in Me; *sarva-bhūtāni*—all living beings; *na*—not; *cha*—and; *aham*—I; *teṣhu*—in them; *avasthitaḥ*—dwell

When we try to understand what is being indicated by Shri Krishna we have to take recourse to the famous metaphor of the Dream analogy- in my dream what is the substratum? – me. What is the dream made of?- me – my consciousness. Does it have any rules of manifestation? Yes, I make them as I like, in a dream I can fly, I can even die- but of course not be dead. Do I pervade the dream? yes. In what manner? Unmanifest -formless form. Where is everything? In me. Is everything in Me? Yes. Does the dream universe limit me? NO. However, Vedanta does not call this Universe a dream by no stretch of imagination is it a dream. The dream analogy holds good in so far as to explain- what the Universe is made of Ishvara [alone]- which is therefore the Upadana Kaarana[material cause] – the substratum [without which it cannot exist] and how does it function? Like in the Dream we have dream rules and laws- that is an intelligence is at work, that is termed the Nimitta kaaran[intelligent cause], – the cause of the functioning of the Universe- are the physical laws such as gravity etc. and it also indicates the law of Karma by which every manifest reality of existence, is governed. Now, therefore, when we pray to a stone, or cow or the Sun or the planets- what are we worshipping? The Ishvara in them. This truth that Ishvara pervades everything, is missed and the Hindu religion is

labelled as being polytheistic that is believing in many Gods, as opposed to the mono theistic religions like Christianity or Islam who believe in one God- which one? The one in the heaven and who is the creator of this universe. However, when the point of all pervasiveness is brought forth the theologists coin the word pantheism, which postulates that reality = divinity. This however, limits Ishvara to this Universe. Our Shastra- here the Lord is saying-*na cha aham teshu avasthita-* I do not dwell in them- meaning – the Universe does not limit me. Besides pantheism, does not allow for a personal or anthropomorphic God. The secret herein explained is thus- The all-pervading Ishvara is the immanent aspect of Brahman and that which lies beyond not limited by this universe is the transcendent reality- the Supreme Brahman. Thus, there are the two aspects of Divinity - the immanent - *Apara Brahman* [Ishvara], and the transcendent - *Para Brahman*. Therefore, when Ishvara is defined – He [the principle] is said to be *sarva vyapi-* all pervading, and *sarvadnya-* all-knowing for not only does He pervade the universe in the formless form for the very fabric of the universe is made of Him, He also rules and regulates it through an Intelligence; what a staggering Intelligence way beyond our limited grasp- that which has created this 1.5 kg Brain which is trying to grasp the mechanics presented here!

Shloka 5

na—never; cha—and; mat-sthāni—abide in Me; bhūtāni—all living beings; paśhya—behold; me—My; yogam aiśhwaram—divine energy; bhūta-bhrit—the sustainer of all living beings; na—never; cha—yet; bhūta-sthaḥ—dwelling in; mama—My; ātmā—Self; bhūta-bhāvanah—the Creator of all beings

Notice the two statements in shloka 4 *मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि* – all beings are in Me and in shloka 5 *न च मत्स्थानि भूतानि* – all beings are not in Me- contradictory? No, Shri Krishna is now revealing His transcendent aspect- the *ParaBrahman*. He then says, *pashya-* see- *dekho*, it is by the power of my *Yoga-Yogam aishvaryam* [that is His Creative power] that this manifest universe comes into being. I am the sustainer – *bhutbhrunna* and they come into being from Me, but I am not in them.

Shloka 7

सर्वभूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम् ।

कल्पक्षये पुनस्तानि कल्पादौ विसृजाम्यहम् ॥ 7 ॥

Wielding My Nature I procreate again and again Arjuna, during the final dissolution all beings enter My Prakruti [the prime cause] and at the beginning of creation I send them forth again.

Swami Rama elaborates that according to the Vedic scriptures, half a Kalpa [the day of Brahma] lasts for 4,326, 000,000 human years – that is one daytime of Brahman- from the beginning of manifestation to the dissolution. [night of Brahma- same number of years.] At dissolution all beings return to the primordial nature and this cycle goes on endlessly. The pure Self remains unaffected by the action performed by Prakruti – its primordial nature. The pure Self uses the Prakruti to manifest the Universe.

Ekknath tells the story of Rishi Markandeya who experienced the beginning and dissolution of the Universe as per our scriptures and explains that each of us is on a journey to discover the underlying unity of existence. Some of us take longer than others, some of us long so ardently that we reach earlier. All are destined to complete their journey. The control of the present Karma which will mould the future, is in our hands and that alone can propel us to our goal. The present situation is the result of our past Karma totally not in our control today, and thus, the Sufi mystic Ansari of Herat says, “Others fear what will happen tomorrow, I fear what happened yesterday!”

Story time, taken from the net:

Before the beginning, there was an end: the end of the old era. . . Black clouds obstructed the sun and hurled lightning in every direction. Unrelenting rains lashed the ground. The seven rivers began to swell and the four oceans started to overflow. Waves as high as mountains drowned the earth. This was pralaya, the final dissolution of the world, before its regeneration. The sole witness to this cosmic deluge was Markandeya Rishi, a great saint.

One evening, Markandeyaji sat on the bank of the river Subhadra, to do the evening Sandhya Vandan worship. It seemed to him that the sea was rising on all sides, coming towards him, flooding everything in its path. The water

reached him and swept him away, but he did not die. He saw the whole world submerged in water. Sometimes, some creatures of the sea would swallow him and sometimes some other creatures would swallow him, but they would throw him out again. He wandered thus for several millions of years. Ultimately, he saw a tiny baby sleeping on a cupped leaf of a banyan (peepal) tree.

It is stated by the Lord in the Vedas: "Oh, Human! This village of yours is balanced on the banyan leaf and your lifespan is just alike a drop of water running down that leaf, which may fall any minute."

Suddenly, amongst all the confusion, Markandeya noticed a banyan leaf floating on the ocean, tossed by the waves. On this unlikely raft lay a beautiful and adorable child, suckling his right toe, unperturbed by the calamity that had befallen the world. It was Krishna as Balaji, the newborn cosmic child.

The infant's heavenly smile negated the brutality of the pralaya (cosmic deluge). His compassionate glance reassured Markandeya that life would go on, convincing him that the world never ends, but only changes.

Now, Markandeya saw that the baby was sucking his own big toe. The Mahatmas have said, about this, that the baby was the Lord Bala-Gopal himself. He was sucking his big toe, to check what sweetness it has, which makes people drink the water touched by it.

When Markandeyaji went close to this baby, he was sucked in with the air, when the baby took a breath. Inside, he saw hundreds of thousands of universes and all that had been consumed by the deluge - the skies, the seas, the earth, gods, demons, humans, animals and plants. So much so, that he even had a glimpse of his own Ashram on the banks of the Subhadra River. He saw himself sitting in meditation. Markandeya thus realized that the child was none other than the cosmic God (Narayana) who had withdrawn the world into himself.

Since Saint Markandeya, the son of Mrikand Rishi, was worshipping the Lord, the Lord was pleased with him, ready to give any boons Markandeya would wish for.

Markandeyaji had no material desire whatsoever, but when the Lord Narayana appeared before him and told him to ask for a boon since He was pleased with Markandeyaji's stuti. Markandeyaji prayed, "Sir, I have obtained your vision, and desire nothing else. However, I want to see what your Maya is. Please grace me with a glimpse of your Maya."

The Lord was quite surprised to hear Markandeyaji's request. However, he said, "All right, you will have a glimpse."

Then Markandeya emerged again, when the baby exhaled. When he went to bow down to the baby, he realized that there was no baby, and no other scene. He was back at the same spot, on the same day, at the same time, as when he started his Sandhya Vandan, his worship of the Lord.

Markandeyaji thought, "Oh, what was all that which I saw?" Then he understood that it was the play of Maya, which he had seen. Maya hid the Paramatma, hid the truth, and showed - like a magic show - that, which did not exist. Markandeyaji was wonderstruck. He realized that one can never understand God but only sing His glories. He thus became engrossed in the prayers and meditation of the Lord again.

The sage Markandeya was the one who witnessed Lord Krishna as a toe-sucking infant lying on a banyan leaf, floating in the vastness of the primordial cosmic ocean. When the perplexed sage asked the god to explain the secret behind his apparition, the lord replied as follows: "I am the Primal Cosmic Man, Narayana . . . I am the Lord of Waters." Thus, this image of the playful infant Krishna is in reality a manifestation of the cosmic form of Vishnu, and corresponds to the epithet often used for Shiva 'sadyojata,' or the new born. This cosmic Vishnu is different from his awesome universal manifestation envisaged in the Bhagvad Gita known as the Vishvarupa.

Shankara: With the help of Prakruti composed of the three Gunas, which is subject to Me these beings emanate- utpatti -at the beginning of a Kalpa each according to their Karma [Avidya being the cause of the same] and at the end of the kalpa – pralaya - they are withdrawn into Me the source of all beings. All of them being rendered powerless by Avidya and other sources of evil under the influence of Prakruti i.e. of Svabhava- or Nature. The Lord is the source and end of all beings. The Lord is not bound by his acts- because the Lord says, "I am the witness I preside this Universe comprising of the moving and unmoving objects, the manifest and unmanifest."

Shloka 10

मयाध्यक्षेण प्रकृतिः सूयते सचराचरम् ।
हेतुनानेन कौन्तेय जगद्विपरिवर्तते ॥ 10 ॥

Arjuna, under My aegis, Nature brings forth the whole creation, consisting of both sentient and insentient beings; it is due to this cause that the wheel of samsara is going round.

The commentary of Eknath is very touching. He quotes an article titled “Why does the stomach not digest itself?” from an American scientific journal. Undoubtedly there are many scientific explanations but is it not wonderful to contemplate? The strongest of acids Hydrochloric acid, is released in the gastric mucosa in which metals may dissolve, but no holes form in the stomach. Whoever designed this? We have unravelled the details of anatomy of the ear, eye and even the neurons but who powers them? All physical chemical and even quantum laws may be deciphered but the Knower of all this is not Known. One of the key phrases in this shloka is Jagadviparivartate- the Universe turning round. The power behind the evolution of the Universe is the creative aspect of the Lord. To discover this power of the Supervisor, the only key is meditation. He cites many stories one which illustrates the powers of the Lord as Shri Krishna, is when Karna is about to kill Arjuna in battle, Shri Krishna lowers the chariot into the earth such that the arrow takes the crown of Arjuna, but he is saved. For the Lord laws of physics etc do not apply! They are under His control.

Shankara; By Me presiding as a mere viewer on every side and the immutable witness, My Maya i.e. Avidya composed of the three gunas, produces the Universe comprising the moving and unmoving objects. I remain uninvolved, unconcerned. The One, the luminous, hidden in all beings, all pervading, the inner Self of all, the superintendent of all acts, the abode of all beings, the witness, the perceiver, alone and free from qualities – Svetavatara Up.6-1. Because, I preside the Universe moving and unmoving, the manifest and unmanifest moves on, through all stages. Indeed, all activity in the world such as I shall enjoy this, see this, hear this, feel pleasure, feel pain, to gain this I shall do it, shall learn this, arises by way of forming an object of consciousness and its end is in consciousness. Such chants as who in the Supreme heaven [of the heart] is the witness of this? [Tai. Br. 2-8-9] Answer the question: Of what purpose is this creation by the One, the Divine, the pure all-witnessing spirit or Consciousness, having really no concern with any enjoyment whatever.

The Bhagvad Gita: Accordingly, as there is no conscious entity other than the One Divine Being, there cannot be a separate enjoyer and it is therefore irrelevant to ask.

So say the Shruti: 'Who could perceive It directly and who could declare whence born and why this variegated creation? [Tai Br. 2-8-9] Wisdom enveloped by unwisdom – thereby mortals are deluded.'

'In the shlokas 11 and 12 Shri Krishna says 'the fools do not know Me as I am embodied, they do not recognise Me and despise Me.'

Shloka 13

महात्मानस्तु मां पार्थ दैवीं प्रकृतिमाश्रिताः ।

भजन्त्यनन्यमनसो ज्ञात्वा भूतादिमव्ययम् ॥ 13 ॥

On the other hand, Arjuna, great souls who have adopted the divine Nature, knowing Me as the prime source of all beings and the imperishable, eternal, worship Me constantly with one pointedness of mind.

Those great beings who have emptied their minds and received divine wisdom knowing Me to be the imperishable source of all creation, worship Me, at all times with single minded devotion, for they desire nothing else. To them the world holds no attraction, for they have tasted the joy of eternal bliss. They can speak of nothing else, they sing My praises and delight in remembering Me. Firm in their knowledge of the Truth, they worship in love who am their very Self.

Shloka 16

अहं क्रतुरहं यज्ञः स्वधाहमहमौषधम् ।

मन्त्रोऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम् ॥ 16 ॥

I am the Vedic ritual, and the sacrifice, and the offering to the departed; I am the herbage and the food grains, I am the sacred mantra, I am the clarified butter, I am the sacred fire, and I verily the act of offering oblations into fire.

Shloka 17

पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः ।

वेद्यं पवित्रमोङ्कार ऋक्साम यजुरेव च ॥ 17 ॥

I am the sustainer and ruler of this Universe, its father, mother, and grandfather, one worth knowing, the purifier, sacred syllable Om, and the three Vedas- rik, yajus and Sama.

Taking the two shlokas together Swami Rama says the Lord is the sacrifice. Lord is both existent and non-existent and beyond. All sacrifices are verily made unto Him for He resides in all. When one is able to see the unity in diversity one can truly experience the Self. Nothing exists without His existence. Therefore, He is everything.

The sacred syllable Om, represents both the immanent and the transcendent and therefore is the Lord. All knowledge in the form of the Vedas arise from Him alone.

Shankara: (16) I am Kratu, am yajnya, amavadha, am anushadha, am mantra, Myself the butter, I am the act of offering. Kratu is a class Vedic sacrifice. Yajnya is the worship enjoined in the smrutis, syadha is the food offered to the ancestors (Pitrus). The aushudha means plants in general, including rice and barley, eaten by all living beings, or Syadha is food in general and aushadha is the medicinal food offered to alleviate sickness. I am the mantra, the chant with which the oblation is offered to the Pitris and the Devattas. I am the fire into which ghee [clarified butter], is poured.

I am the goal, the fruit of action, am the witness of what is done and what is not done by all living beings. I am the abode, wherein all living beings, dwell. I am the shelter for the distressed, relief from distress those who come to Me. I am the friend. Do good without expecting any return. I am the source of the world. I am that in which it is dissolved and that in which it stays. I am the treasure-house, that which living beings shall enjoy in a future period. I am the imperishable seed, that which causes the growth of all things that germinate, and which endures as long as the world, sansara endures. Nothing indeed springs up without a seed and since growth is constant it is understood that continuity of the seed never fails.

Shloka 22

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ 22 ॥

The devotees, however, who loving no one else constantly think of Me, and worship Me in a disinterested spirit, to those ever united in thought with Me, I bring full security and attend to their needs.

Swami Rama: Has not discussed this particular shloka except with the previous two. No specific comments on this. However, his own life was an absolute indicator of how the Lord takes care of the one whose mission in life is to serve God. He was given 7dollars and a ticket to go to Japan and told that his mission was to go to USA! Well, he trusted his Guru and got on flight to Japan. His co-passenger was taken up by his personality and learnt about Yoga etc from him during the flight. Out of curiosity as they were alighting the plane, he asked Swami Rama where he would be staying and Swami Rama replied with a friend. So, the Japanese guy asked him who is the friend and Swami Rama replied, “maybe it’s you!” The Japanese took him home. Swami Rama taught in Japan for 6 months and was then given a ticket to USA and the rest is history.

The Lord takes care of all the needs of the one who is totally dependent on Him. All the mundane and spiritual needs are taken care of by the Supreme. Life Insurance of India has this part of the shloka as its motto-Yogakshema vahamyaham– the Lord takes care of what you have and what you will need – you just have to depend on Him alone. The story of Prahalad is also very pertinent in this chapter particularly to illustrate the above few shlokas. His father Hiranyakashyapu was enraged that Prahalad should worship Lord Vishnu when he himself was the Lord of all the three worlds and even tried to get Prahlad killed several times. The Lord Vishnu saved him each time. Finally in exasperation Hiranyakashypu decided to kill Prahlad himself and challenges Prahlad to now invoke the help of Lord Vishnu as Hiranyakashyapu had the boon that he could not be killed on land, in air or sea, inside the home or outside it, by man or animal. So, he challenged Prahlad and asked him, “Where is your God? is your God in this pillar?” and he strikes the pillar of his palace and lo! The Lord appears in the form of half man half lion drags Hiranyakashyapu to the threshold, of the palace and placing him on His lap tears him apart with his Nails! The story exemplifies how the Lord is all pervading and will protect all those who take refuge in Him and totally surrender themselves at His lotus feet.

Ekknath: Has narrated his story of how he started the Blue Mountain foundation. He was of course a professor on a full bright scholarship to Berkeley. However, he had no funds, and his wife was quite surprised at his decision but of course supported him. So, from a few students and an occasional donation it grew to its present status.

In life I have tremendous trust in the fitness of things and have always experienced Grace e.g. the Ganga Yatra. I think it is true about each of us. The story of Tulsidas comes to mind. Many a devotee came to his little hut to pay homage and left many a gift. One day a couple of robbers decided they would go to the hut at dead of night. Accordingly, they tried but every attempt failed because the hut was guarded by two lustrous beings with arrows. The next day, they went to Tulsidas and confessed “Oh!” He lamented, “take away whatever you want, I have no use of these things- you have unnecessarily troubled my Sri Ram and Laxman!” He takes care of the devotees who are ever united to Him.

The story is of Narendranath [Swami Vivekanand]- whose condition was pathetic, his father had died he had siblings to be looked after and no finances. He therefore went to Sri Ramkrishna and asked him to beg Ma for some relief. Sri Ramakrishna directed him to go himself, so he went. At the temple, Mother came alive and Narendra asked for devotion, truth and Love and forgot all about his miserable condition. This happened three times. Then Sri Ramakrishna was pleased with his disciple and went to ask Ma. Narendra’s condition improved and they never lacked food or shelter thereafter.

Shankara: Those men of renunciation [sanyasins] who worship Me all around, ever meditating on Me, regarding themselves as non-separate, looking upon the Supreme God, Narayan, as their own Self, to those who see the Reality, who are ever devout, I secure gain, I secure to them what is not already possessed and secure to them safety -preservation of what is already possessed. As said in discourse 7 shloka 17, 18- they form My very Self and are dear to Me.

Shloka 26

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।
तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥ 26 ॥

Whosoever offers Me with love a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water I appear in person before that selfless devotee of sinless mind, and delightfully partake of that article offered by him with love.

The Lord accepts even the smallest offering when it is given with devotion. He does not need anything all belongs to Him, yet when a devotee offers humbly, the article does not matter. Swami Rama goes on to say that even a selfless act done in the service of another is accepted by the Lord. This benefits the giver in two ways- first he practices non-attachment and second, he sees God in the other so no separation remains. When offering the Lord, the fruit of every action becomes the nature of a devotee no action binds him.

Worship is done during rituals- the name of the Lord is recited, and a flower or petal is placed at the feet of the Lord, this procedure is repeated till all the names have been recited. Shri Ramakrishna used to worship Ma Kali and while performing the puja got so absorbed in her that with every divine name, he would put a flower on his own head. It is the devotion that matters, not the object offered. The best offering is the service to fellow human beings with cheerfulness and enthusiasm.

Whenever I sing the Aarti, I wonder if God closes his ears as I am so besura (out of tune) and then a story from Sai Baba's life comes to mind and am deeply consoled. It so happens that a simple hearted maushibai (aunty) was vigorously massaging Baba's abdomen so much so that it seemed his intestines and blood vessels might rupture, so the on lookers gently suggested to her to be little more considerate in her service. Baba got enraged and took his stake (small stick) and placed one end against a pole and the other against his abdomen and started closing the distance. All were terrified at what would happen next and someone tried to pull Baba away but was pushed away. After sometime Baba's anger cooled down, the lesson learnt was -the Lord accepts any service done with love and affection and none should come in the way.

Shloka 27

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥ 27 ॥

Arjuna, whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as oblation to the sacred fire, whatever you bestow as a gift, whatever you do by way of penance, Offer all that to Me.

Eknath: Every term in this verse has a practical application it begins with yat karoshi thus everything that we do, every act should be offered to the Lord. This gives us an opportunity to analyse what we are offering, then wisely choose that which benefits all and do that action. The next term is even more revealing- yat ashnasi which means whatever you eat. Here it signifies everything you partake of from every sense organ - seeing, smelling, taste, hearing and even touch. Thus, watching violence and sex, eating junk food all come into this category. Beware of what you allow to enter your psyche. Then Yaj juhoshi- here Eknath translates it as “offering in renunciation” not sacrifice. He therefore asks us to offer our selfish desires, as the ultimate practice towards realising the Self. The next term is Yat dadasi - whatever you give - here he quotes the puranas where brahma who created Humans / Gods and Demons- gave only a single syllable ‘da’ as advise to all before sending them down to their realms. The Devas understood – da to mean dam- as self-control, the demons- daya -compassion, and the humans- daan- charity. So, it is our duty and joy to give and we should offer whatever charity we do to the Lord. Shri Krishna finally says- yat tapsyasi again Eknath translates this as suffering, and says, when someone really troubles you and you feel hurt and want to react- stop yourself, forgive and exercise patience and offer this to the Lord. That is the real penance.

It seems easy but is very hard to do, and time and again we fail to curb our ego if we identify with it. The whole crux is to overcome ourselves as we take ourselves to be. This is like lifting ourselves with our socks- doomed to failure! Therefore, if the truth be told we must look for another way- rather we must look another way and that way is inward. What is this thing we call ego which we are expected to surrender- let’s get to know a little more about it. We will find on reflection it is dense identification with the name and form we carry. With advancing age, what also accumulates are likes - dislikes, conditionings, desires and all this seems solid and real to us. On closer examination we can see that all that I call me are my accumulations- body with food, mind with desires all safely kept in the vault of memory which responds in less than a

second to my query, so much so that I have no doubt it's me! Well, that is all the junk and baggage we are carrying. So, then who am I? The question alone stands - there is no ego to answer that one. Once the cloud over it thins away even intellectually, it is clear that all is the doing of the Lord, and then offering oneself totally, without any reservations becomes possible. The other way is to know oneself as fallible and meek and surrender to the All-pervading One.

Shloka 28

शुभाशुभफलैरेवं मोक्षयसे कर्मबन्धनैः ।

संन्यासयोगयुक्तात्मा विमुक्तो मामुपैष्यसि ॥ 28 ॥

With your mind thus established in the yoga of renunciation (offering of all actions to Me), you will be freed from the bondage of actions in the form of good and evil results; thus, freed from them, you will attain Me.

Swami Rama: Has taken 26,27,28 together as these shlokas convey the same message in greater detail.

Ekknath: All of us have had moments in the past that we may regret, but on the spiritual path one is asked not to look back. To avoid repeating the same mistake one should do, meditation and repeating of the mantra. Sometimes the same thought keeps repeating itself like a stuck record in our head, the easiest way to drop that is to go for a long brisk walk and repeat the mantra. Never speak about it, repeat or take suggestions, that only reinforces the thought in you. The Lord forgives and you can forgive too, in fact by taking to meditation and repetition of the Mantram people have even been able to come off many years of alcohol abuse. So never think it is too late or underestimate the resilience of our consciousness, whatever the damage done to our body or mind -it can be overcome.

Shri Krishna has assured us that once we have offered ourselves to Him- he will not forsake us and surely all that is auspicious will happen for us. We will most certainly reach Him.

Shankara: thus, when you offer everything to Me it constitutes renunciation and in as much as everything is offered to Me it is also Yoga as an action [Karma]. Thus, with a mind equipped with renunciation and Yoga thou shalt be

liberated from bonds while yet living and when this body is dead, thou shalt come to Me.

Shloka 30

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।

साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥ 30 ॥

Even if vilest sinner worships with exclusive devotion, he should be regarded as a saint for he has rightly resolved. (he is positive in his belief that there is nothing like devoted worship of God).

Swami Rama: There are many instances in history when even great sinners have been able to reform themselves and attain to Godhood. (Ratnakar-Valmiki). This life is full of infinite possibilities. Once such a being has achieved equanimity, he rises above the opposites and then friend and foe are alike to him. His anger is not roused, and he does not fall prey to lust, as his resolve itself has purified him.

Ekknath: This shloka is one of great consolation to all men and women of all ages. We have an inherent capacity to reverse physical and mental ill health only by making the right resolve of turning to the Lord for forgiveness. The story of the prodigal son bears this amply. Yet even though we are all children of God we must not repeat the same mistakes or else our progress would be retarded. Howsoever long standing, is our bad habit it need not take the same number of years to overcome, we simply shift our perspective. Here Sri Krishna says, kshipram bhavati dharmatma: we swiftly become the soul of goodness, often even stronger than before. One can also start pardoning those who we think have wronged us for in pardoning we are also pardoned. (St. Francis). The way is first to rectify on the physical level by change in lifestyle- diet exercise and on the mind level with regular meditation, with discipline. In the next shloka the Lord says:

Shloka 31

क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।

कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥ 31 ॥

shasvatchhantim nigachati: in a very short time our hearts will be at peace. And finally, Shri Krishna says the devotee will never perish.

I love this shloka even as I did the earlier one in chapter 4 shloka 36 wherein also Sri Krishna tells us that even the vilest sinner can attain to Him if he takes the right resolve. It gives me great hope. By attaining deep understanding the sinner can resolve to surrender at the feet of the Lord. Once he gives up his arrogance and sees his mistake- he is free for the awakened man cannot revert back to his dream even if tries.

Shloka 34

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।

मामेवैष्यसि युक्तवैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥ 34॥

Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me, and make obeisance to Me; thus, linking yourself with Me and entirely depending on Me, you shall come to Me.

Swami Rama: The last verse of this chapter instructs the aspirant to systematically attain the highest perfection. When, the mind is not allowed to roam around and focused on the Lord alone it slowly flows inwards and a state of peace and happiness arise. Such a tranquil and one pointed mind automatically enters the state of union with the Lord. When devotion is total the aspirant does not have any difficulty in surrendering the fruits of his action to the Lord, for he knows the string puller is none other than the Lord Himself. Shri Krishna comforts such a one and says you shall then surely come to Me.

Ekknath: This is the refrain throughout the Bhagvad Gita. The key word is manmana- "let your mind be filled with Me." When the heart dwells solely on the Lord and meditation is consistently and regularly practised, without missing it for any reason at all even when one is put to the test sometimes, it is manmana. In the event that the Lord sends such a blow that one finds it almost impossible to meditate- then one has to repeat the class. If, however, whatever the outward condition, your mind remains centred on the Lord and is filled with Love, the Lord assures us we will be united with Him. Therefore, under no circumstance should one ever forget Him- All the conditions then improve and we attain our aspirations - about that there is no doubt at all.

This shloka is recited last in the Saptashloki Gita which has only 7 verses and this is one of them. It is the ultimate promise of the Lord and a foregone conclusion for the devoted aspirant that he will merge into the Divine. The

question Shri Mooji asks “Does a lover have to remember his beloved?” comes to mind, if one is in love can one think of anything else? This is easily understood because all one thinks of is Him; a poem I had composed comes to mind:

Over to You,
My life, my love,
No demand- none,
Free like a dove.

Thy wisdom Thy grace,
Heart filled with wonder,
The Grand Design,
Yet You remain yonder.

The play unfolds,
Glorious in every hue,
Watching silently Beloved
I bow to You, nay i melt in You.

Kabir has said- Premgali badi sankadi esme do na jaane paay. Tu hai to mein nahee aur mein hun to tu nahee. The love lane is very narrow- if You are there I am not and if I am there You are not. Swami Rama’s famous statement is “Love is the eternal traveller through the Universe.”

Summary: *The very title of this discourse has expressed the profound insight into Bhakti and Jnana to be discussed, which can ferry even the worst sinner across the ocean of sansar if he makes the right resolve. Shri Krishna first explains how this universe emanates from Him and although is pervaded by Him in no way limits Him. Prakruti spins this web under the direction of the blessed Lord. The various ways in which worship is offered to different gods and even unto the Lord, all are accepted by Him. However, the one who worships Him ceaselessly, finding no separation between himself and the Lord, is carried by the Lord Himself, protecting his gains and obtaining for him his spiritual goals. In the context of the times when rituals and wealth seemed needed to give charity to please the gods, Shri Krishna gives hope to all by saying that even a leaf, a fruit, water if offered with a pure heart [no expectations] full of*

devotion is received unconditionally. Further, one should worship Him by offering every action, every food partaken [from any of the senses] any austerity, any charity performed to Him. This would ensure a constant remembrance of the Lord. Shri Krishna then explains the fate even of the sinner as one who could attain Him speedily if the surrender is total. Not only this but those born under conditions not favourable for spiritual pursuits such as the Vaishya, Sudras and women are also worthy of attaining Him through devotion, then what to speak of the pure hearted [to be noted] Brahmanas and Kshatriyas. The discourse closes with the instruction on how the ultimate union of the Jiva with Shiva can be attained.

Reflection and Exercises:

1. What is your understanding of ParaBrahman?
2. How can we worship the Lord? Shlokas 14,15,16. Answer what your heart says.
3. What does Saakshi mean?
4. In shloka 22 what do you understand by Yogakshema? Give an example from your own life if you have one.
5. What gift pleases the Lord?
6. What fate awaits a sinner?
7. What are the ways to worship the Lord?
8. Please read shloka 29 and explain how an enlightened being can treat a friend and foe alike. Please write in detail.
9. Who is eligible to love the Lord? Kindly elaborate.
10. Select your own keywords from chapter 9.
11. Define paradox, oxymoron and contradiction. What is the paradox in chapter 9? Explain.
12. Enumerate the attitudes Sri Krishna has recommended for daily life till chapter 9 only.

Discourse 10 - Vibhuti Yoga - The Yoga of Divine glories.

In the last discourse Shri Krishna ends by saying let your mind be absorbed in Me and thou shall come to Me. The concept of Ishwara has also been discussed and in this discourse, Shri Krishna starts to describe who He is – Ishvara-Purshottama. Yet, not only to the ordinary reader but even to a believer this particular discourse creates a whirl in the mind, for how can anyone describe his own glories and that too in such a stupefying manner. If Truth be told this entire manifest Universe- is but an expression of His grandeur and like He Himself says in the last shloka

अथवा बहूनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन ।

विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥ 42 ॥

Or, what will you gain by knowing all this in detail, Arjuna? Suffice to say that I hold the entire Universe by a fraction of My yogic power.

One might question what is the need for all this? There indeed is a need for it- how else are we to understand that the substratum of this cosmos is none other than Brahman i.e. the Divine Consciousness and Shri Krishna is aware of it! I wonder how Shri Krishna could even bear this knowledge in a human frame. Even with a glimpse of that infinite joy the mind and body are overwhelmed, what to speak of the Being who was an embodiment of it. When we read this discourse with a sense of wonder we realise it has nothing to do with the miniscule ego that binds us to this limited identity. This then may be the very reason for this description enabling us not only to visualise but actualize this understanding. To sing the glories of the Lord is the best form of Bhakti and thus we are enabled to understand that in fact all is the Lord- there is no other.

Shloka 1

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

भूय एव महाबाहो शृणु मे परमं वचः ।

यत्तेऽहं प्रीयमाणाय वक्ष्यामि हितकाम्यया ॥ 1 ॥

Shri Bhagwan said: Arjuna, hear once again My supreme word, which I shall speak to you, who are so loving, out of solicitude for your welfare.

Shri Krishna can see that Arjuna loves to hear the glories of Shri Krishna and that is the reason Shri Krishna is expounding the same theme further. The profound teachings imparted thus far gradually dispel the doubts of Arjuna now the divine teacher that Shri Krishna is, Swami Rama says the Guru, is like the mother who has the well-being of the child at heart. He therefore says, even the gods do not know, and sages cannot fully comprehend, the divine power Shri Krishna wields.

Ekknathji has put it in an equally touching way. He gives the example of a game in which clues are left in the oddest of places to tell you where to find the hidden person or thing. Like that he says Shri Krishna is giving clues as to where to find Him. In every place that excellence is observed He resides little more clearly although he pervades every atom and all the manifest world arises in Him. Jami the Persian poet writes:

To display His eternal attributes
In their inexhaustible Variety
The Lord made the green fields of time and space
And the living garden of the cosmos,
So that each branch, leaf and fruit reveal
His innumerable glories.

Shankara says Arjuna is so intensely delighted as though he were drinking the immortal nectar and feeling this, Shri Krishna continues.

We will see in this discourse the highlights of Shri Krishna's manifest form. This then will lead us into the cave of our heart where He dwells.

Summary of the verses 2-7 is as follows:

Not even the Devas [also another word for the senses] nor the sages [the seven Maharishis- Atri, Vashishtha, Vishvamitra, Kashyap etc] know my origin for I am the cause of them. Those who know Me in reality as birthless and without a beginning, is undeluded [asammudha- not at all deluded] and is purged of all sins. All traits in the Vyashti [individual], emanate from Me alone, including all opposites, the seven Maharishees [Mahat, Ahankara and five tanmatras].

For the Creation of Samashti- [Universe] the four ancients [Sanatkumar, Sanaka, Sananda, and Sanatana] are all born from My mind, all creatures

descended from them. Those who know this My glory and Power in reality meaning through experience, through effort and without any wavering, are established in Me about this there is no doubt.

Shloka 8

अहं सर्वस्य प्रभवो मत्तः सर्वं प्रवर्तते

इति मत्वा भजन्ते मां बुधा भावसमन्विताः ॥ ८ ॥

I am the source of all creation and everything in the world moves because of Me; knowing thus, the wise, full of devotion, constantly worship Me.

The Lord is the source of all creation and there is none other than Him. Manifestation depends solely on Him. Knowing this truth, the yogi who has established himself in this Knowledge teaches all he meets and guides them to the Truth. His every thought, word and deed are only in service to the Lord, whom he sees in each and every one he meets. To him no task is difficult or small, he is able to attain anything he sets out to do. Such a great one is called the perennial yogi for he abides in the Lord only-Swami Rama.

Eknatji says, the Lord is very gentle with His devotee, He spreads the transformation from separateness to unicity over many years. Eknath describes his journey home to the Nilgiri mountains and says how difficult it is first by train which has again to be changed at a junction, then by a bus with so many passengers, hot dusty roads and the smell of fuel along the way till the foothills are reached, then a slow climb which has many turns and twists, but the air has changed- it is suddenly clear and cool. He likens this to our spiritual journey where in the beginning the road is rough and trying, it seems as though one is going nowhere really, and yet one is progressing to the foothills, patience and persistence will pay rich rewards. Discipline is the key. Then as we continue our practice and the mind starts to like what we are doing, even the ego seems submissive we start to enjoy the journey. One waits in joyful agony like a bride awaiting her bridegroom, until the Grace of union is bestowed. This cannot be predicted and no amount of effort can ever achieve it. It happens softly unannounced and the Lamp is lit! Where there was darkness suddenly it is flooded with light.

Just felt so touched as I read Eknath's account of the journey- could not place myself anywhere near and wept asking when will Grace come for me? And yet I strongly feel His presence by my side through all time and space, tears roll down heavy and fast, decrying my laziness and indolence, in trying to sweep the mind clean of vikaras. Whenever I notice any shade of attraction which holds me back - I only console myself saying- well He dwells there too! Quickly reminding myself don't you truly desire union with the ultimate? Or are you just sight-seeing?'

Shankara: The Lord endows His devotees with wisdom. To them who are devout, worshipping Me, not for any purpose of their own but out of love for Me, to them I give that devotion of right knowledge (Buddhi Yoga) My essential nature by which they [those who worship Me with their thought on Me] know Me the Supreme Lord, the Self, as their own Self.

Summary of shlokas 9-11. Shri Krishna enumerates the qualities of the devotees- mind entirely fixed On Me, with all the vital forces dedicated to Me, they are content simply in conversing about Me and enlightening each other about Me they revel in Me. To such devotees who are constantly yoked to Me, who worship Me full of love, I give Buddhi yoga by which they know Me. The darkness of ignorance of such a devotee is dispelled by Me dwelling in their heart, through My compassion.

Shankara: Ignorance is caused by the absence of discriminatory knowledge- Vivek, the lamp of wisdom fed by the oil of pure devotion, [Bhakti Prasaad] fanned by the wind of earnest meditation on Me, furnished with wick of right intuition purified by the cultivation of piety, chastity, and other virtues, placed in a windless spot in the antahkaran, which is completely detached from the objects of the world [Vairagya] which is the bowl that holds the oil. Only the Lord can remove this ignorance, the devotee can refine himself only to the point of thinning the veil which is ultimately lifted by the Lord Himself.

Shloka 12

अर्जुन उवाच ।

परं ब्रह्म परं धाम पवित्रं परमं भवान् ।

पुरुषं शाश्वतं दिव्यमादिदेवमजं विभुम् ॥ 12 ॥

Arjuna said: You are the transcendent, eternal, supreme abode and the greatest purifier; all the seers speak of You as the eternal divine Purusha- the Primal Deity, unborn and all pervading.

Shloka 13

आहुस्त्वामृषयः सर्वे देवर्षिर्नारदस्तथा ।

असितो देवलो व्यासः स्वयं चैव ब्रवीषि मे ॥ 13 ॥

Likewise speak the celestial sage Narada, the sages Asita and Devala and the great sage Vyaasa, and Yourself too proclaim this to me.

Swami Rama says Arjuna has realized that the Lord resides in each of us and in the entire manifestation and refers to the great sages as singing the glories of the Lord.

Here Arjuna speaks of the fundamental reality as One, thus explained by all sages and Shri Krishna Himself. It is very puzzling that we fall in line and buy the belief of a limited identity so easily that we, disbelieve Jesus and say, “there must be some mistake,” when Jesus, comes to tell us ‘the kingdom of heaven lies within you.’

In the 18 /19 verses Arjuna asks Shri Krishna to elaborately tell him the glories and on what [keshu], should he meditate [parichintayam] again and again. It seems to me that Arjuna’s desire to hear directly from the Lord, is insatiable. Who can blame him? One is simply awestruck when the Lord is Himself speaking and one would naturally beg Him to continue. As we will see Shri Krishna is making Himself tangible all the time, and often we are transported into a timeless dimension e.g. watching a sunset on the beach, or the magnificent Himalayas, the Igvazu falls, the Niagra falls. It need not even be such special places, just watching one’s child grow, a flower blossom or hearing a bird chirping all remind us of His presence everywhere. So when someone asks ‘have you seen God?’ and we tend to answer ‘No’ let us pause and know we see God all the time in everything! In fact there is nothing else!!

Shloka 20

अहमात्मा गुडाकेश सर्वभूताशयस्थितः ।

अहमादिश्च मध्यं च भूतानामन्त एव च ॥ 20 ॥

Arjuna, I am the universal Self seated in the hearts of all Beings; so, I alone am the beginning, the middle and also the end of all beings.

Shlokas 19-40 describe the Vibhuti(special powers) of the Lord, says, Swami Rama. 70 are described. These are minuscule, meant as an indication only, to Arjuna who is addressed as Gudakesha [guda- thick, keshha- hair], one with thick hair, that is a young man, as also, gudak- sleep isha- Lord the one who has conquered sleep. The entire Universe is His divine expansion. The Self of each one is the Lord, and it is difficult for the ordinary person even to imagine this to be true however, when the aspirant starts on his spiritual journey and steadfastly meditates, he too can experience the Truth within. The realisation leads him to love everyone as he loves himself, for now he sees none other than the Lord in all.

Ekknath: There is no other word which expresses the inner essence like the word Atma. Here what is being referred to is not the small petty self - personality, we take ourselves to be, but the indwelling consciousness the true Self that we are in essence. This also consoles us regarding our feelings of self-deprecation such as guilt, remorse, and resentment all of which belong to the personality and can never touch the innermost core of who we are. The Self is forever pure, untouched and brilliant forever shining, we miss its grandeur because of the cloud of ego and closing our eyes with attachment - we just need to remove these obstacles and the Light which was always there will shine forth through us.

This reminds me of the famous story of the lion cub which was brought up by sheep and had learnt to beep and eat grass. When a real lion saw this now grown lion in the midst of sheep behaving as one, he was shocked. The mature lion like the Guru took this misguided lion and showed him his reflection in the river. It still took some time for the sheep lion to believe he was a Lion indeed! This is what Shri Krishna is guiding Arjuna [and us too] to realise. When one truly feels Him within, fear and anxiety take to their heels. He is there from the beginning to the middle, and to the end because he was there before the

beginning, and will be there after the end. The shloka begins with Aham
aatmaa- i.e the recognition of indwelling Purusha by which all is revealed.

Shankara: You should think of Me as the innermost Self, seated in the heart,
within all beings. He who is unable to think of Me as Self [which is pure
knowledge] should think of Me in those things mentioned further as I am the
source, the stay and the end of all beings. One should meditate on Him as the
Shrushti Karta [creator], the Sthiti Karta [sustainer] and the Laya Karta[into
which all is absorbed] reflect upon it.

Note: In these verses the extraordinary powers and manifestations of the Lord
are highlighted where He can be unmistakably recognized. The meaning of the
word Bhuti is victory, happiness, strength and the meaning of Vibhuti is
extraordinary strength and power. Here the Vibhutis are being described.
Arjuna understands that Shri Krishna is both the Upaadana [material] Kaaran
and the Nimitta Kaaran of manifestation. Shri Krishna is the immanent Ishvara
as also the transcendent aspect. Here once again Ishvara being referred to is
conducive for meditation.

Salient points of 18 verses describing Shri Krishna's glories: There are nearly
80-100 Vibhutis [litany means list of-here Shri Krishna's Vibhutis] mentioned.
Any Vibhuti could be meditated on- e.g. the sun[Aditya] with Gayatri Mantra.
Chetana as His glory is the Buddhi Vrutti [highest expression of sentiency] and
that, is what has Viveka and can develop Vairagya. Shri Krishna goes on to
describe among all deities like Rudras- He is Shankara and so on. Meru is the
axis around which the earth is rotating. Even a scientist can actually enter
meditation, just contemplating the laws of the Universe. And so on. Even the
human body is so well designed -it is a miracle of Nature.

Shloka 39

यच्चापि सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन ।

न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान्मया भूतं चराचरम् ॥ 39 ॥

*Arjuna, I am even that , which is the seed of all life. For there is no creature,
moving or unmoving which can exist without Me.*

To conclude the present section, the Lord summarises His Glory{Vibhuti} as follows: There is no being without Me, for anything into which I have not entered would be without Self [could not exist] and would be void [sunya]. Wherefore everything is of My nature [i.e. I am the nature of everything]

Shloka 41

यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।

तत्देवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽशसम्भवम् ॥ 41 ॥

Every such being as is glorious, brilliant and powerful, know that to be a part manifestation of My glory.

Shloka 42

अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन ।

विष्टम्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥ 42 ॥

Or, what will you gain by knowing all this in detail, Arjuna? Suffice it to say that I hold the entire Universe by a fraction of My yogic power.

‘The sages and poets vainly praise the grandeur, beauty, and loftiness of different aspects of the Lord’s manifestation. But manifestations are only fragments of the beauty of the whole’- says Swami Rama. Why not attain to the whole, of what use is just this partial view O Arjuna? The Lord seems to convey.

Ekmath: With these verses Shri Krishna gives the message of the whole discourse so to say- wherever there is selflessness, kindness or forgiveness the Lord is surely present. Like physical forces, these spiritual forces are universal. All of creation responds to these subtle vibrations. Out of His love for Arjuna Shri Krishna has patiently listed some of the ways his presence is manifested throughout creation.

Jagat means jagati iti jagat that which is ever changing is jagat- so it embraces all – the senses, the emotions, the intellect- all experiences of and the universe. The Lord says He upholds it by a fraction of His power.

Shankara: Of what avail to you can be this knowledge of vast but imperfect details. Listen, I will tell you completely of it. I stand sustaining firmly this whole world by one part, by one limb, by one foot i.e. one part of Myself constitutes all beings.

So says the chant: 'All beings form His foot.' Taittiriya Upanishad.3- 12

Note: Personal experiences of the Vibhutis of the Lord. As it happens Venkat needs to go for a surgery on the brain to help him cope with the symptoms of Parkinson's disease. The situation is unpleasant to say the least and one would feel both anxious and nervous about it. The wonder about it all is that: There is a surgery possible, that Venkat is what we call a good surgical risk, that we have found an efficient and good surgeon in Mumbai where both our sons' dwell.

We have friends with immense influence in the same hospital. Such a supportive network as though one can trust the free fall and yet land safely! Venkat's own elder brother, and sister, my brother, sister are all in Mumbai.

It is His divine Grace that surrounds us and upholds us and into which we shall dissolve. All of this can be clearly seen, and this seems to me to be the meaning of divya chakshu (divine eyes) which Shri Krishna bestows to Arjuna in the next discourse when Arjuna desires to see the Viraat Swaroopa. The whole challenge of any situation disappears, and one can simply sink into the grand design without flapping one's wings against a tight cage [the ego!]

Summary: *So, in summary one can say that this particular discourse of Shri Krishna to Arjuna is*

1. out of sheer love for the well-being of Arjuna and us all. Even after Shri Krishna has introduced the qualities of the devotee and how wisdom is bestowed on the devotee who is totally surrendered to His feet, Arjuna still desires to know how is He to be meditated upon. Arjuna wants to know in detail, to which Shri Krishna warmly responds that He would briefly enumerate the feature which would highlight His presence in manifestation.

2. Those who have a body find it very difficult to grasp the concept of Nirguna Brahman – somehow it does not seem real, even if one is convinced intellectually. It therefore is imperative to have a tangible God; Shri Krishna is showing us where His presence is obvious and apparent. It is not only limited

to the most exquisite Himalayas and Ganga, but even human kindness is also only an expression of Him. To the question have you seen God? The answer must necessarily be yes! He is everywhere.

3. The Lord through this discourse has given us divine sight to see Him in each and everything, particularly in all that is strikingly brilliant. The extremes of good and so-called evil, the microscopic to the telescopic view the entire spectrum of manifestation must necessarily be disclosed for He abides in all. This can then lead to the natural, the human tendency, of Saguna Brahma Upasana- worship of the Lord with form. Any aspect enumerated may be taken up for contemplation and meditation.

4. Key words in the discourse are: Prabhava, Buddhiyoga, Parichintayan, Chetana, Japa, Ashvatha, Vasuki, Kaalah, Janhavi, Vaadah, and Jagat.

5. When Shri Krishna concludes saying that only a fraction of His power creates and sustains this universe, Arjuna naturally becomes intensely keen to know what Shri Krishna's whole form must look like and so the next discourse begins with just this request to Shri Krishna.

Universal Self Seated in the hearts of All Beings

Beginning, Middle and the End

SN	Among	He Is
1	Twelve Sons of Aditi	Vishnu
2	Lights	Radiant Sun
3	Maruts	Marichi
4	Stars	Moon
5	Vedas	Sama Veda
6	Gods	Indra
7	Organs of Perception	Mind
8	Living Beings	Consciousness
9	Eleven Rudras	Shiva
10	Yakshas and Rakshasas	Kubera
11	Eight Vasus	Fire (Agni)
12	Mountains	Meru
13	Household Priests	Brihaspati

SN	Among	He Is
14	Generals	Skanda
15	Lakes	Ocean
16	Great Sages	Bhrigu
17	Words	Sacred syllable OM
18	Sacrifices	Japa Yajna
19	Immovable Things	Himalayas
20	Trees	Holy Ashvattha
21	Celestial Sages	Narada
22	Gandharvas	Chitraratha
23	Siddhas	Sage Kapila
24	Horses	Uchchaisravas
25	Mighty Elephants	Airavata
26	Men	King
27	Weapons	Thunderbolt (Vajra)
28	Cows	Kamadhenu
29	Kandarpa	The Progenitor
30	Serpents (Sarpa)	Vasuki
31	Snakes	Shesha (Ananta Naga)
32	Deities of Water	Varuna
33	Pitris (Forefathers)	Aryama
34	Controllers	Yama, Lord of Death
35	Daityas	Prahlada
36	Reckoners	Time
37	Beasts	Lion
38	Birds	Garuda
39	Purifiers	Wind
40	Warriors	Rama
41	Fishes	Shark
42	Rivers	Ganga
43	Creation	Beginning, Middle, and End
44	Sciences	Science of the Self
45	Discussions	Logic
46	Alphabet	The letter A
47	Compounds in Grammar	The Dual

SN	Among	He Is
48	The Lord is	The Imperishable Time
49		Creator facing all around
50		Death and Prosperity
51	Feminine Qualities	Fame, prosperity, speech, memory, intelligence, firmness, forgiveness
52	Hymns	Brihatsaman
53	Metres	Gayatri
54	Twelve Months	Margashirsha
55	Six Seasons	Spring (Flowering Season)
56	Deceitful Practices	Gambling
57	The Splendid	Splendour
58	The Victorious	Victory
59	The Resolute	Determination
60	The Good	Determination and Goodness
61	Vrishnis	Vasudeva (Krishna)
62	Pandavas	Arjuna
63	Sages	Vyasa
64	Wise or Poets	Ushanas (Shukracharya)
65	Rulers	Subduing Power
66	Those Who Seek Victory	Statesmanship
67	Secrets	Silence
68	The Wise	Wisdom
69	All Beings	Seed

Reflection and Exercises

1. What is understood by Prabhava? Refer to shlokas 2/3.
2. Debate on "Bhakti is easier to practice than Jnana".
3. Write a precis on Buddhi Yoga.
4. Why does Arjuna want to know more about Shri Krishna?
5. What is the meaning of Vibhuti and Yoga? Kindly research and add your own experience.
6. Chart the difference between illusion and reality in your understanding.
7. What do you think is your Vibhuti? In which way Sri Krishna shines through you? Answer in not more than 5 lines.

Discourse 11 - Vishvaroop Darshan Yoga - The Yoga of the Vision of the Universal Form

This discourse can only be described as stupefying; it left me gaping at the enormity of even imagining what Arjuna saw- what might be the actual vision is mind blowing. No doubt it is overwhelming, but once one gains his/her balance back like Arjuna does, towards the end of the Vision there is a profound reassurance. We are not alone, nor are we responsible for the world, there is **no need to take on the mantel of the doer**, just relax and watch the grand unfoldment of the most mesmerizing Leela [sport of the Lord], while not forgetting to perform your own role to the hilt!

Gratitude floods this being experiencing the nature of this grand design. What is there for me to be anxious about? Is it death, I fear? Is it ill health, old age? What fear can ever touch me when I am in His arms, as his beloved? He is the Lover of All. Is it not out of Love this Universe came into being in the first place? The bubble appears on the surface of the ocean and submerges- literally merges in the ocean- why the sense of separation? Why the isolation? There is none, none of any kind.

Let us begin and experience the magic of this revelation! Welcome!

Note: From Swami Chinmayananda's commentary on the Bhagvad Gita I would like to add here what he says:

1. After discourse 10 when all the Vibhutis have been theoretically explained now Arjuna wants a practical demonstration of the same, which will be given now.
2. It is fairly easy theoretically to understand the point that e.g. all pots of clay are made of clay, but to imagine that all pots that were, ever are, and will ever be, are of clay is well-nigh impossible, unless we are given the divine sight of knowledge. This divine vision results in discrimination [vivek] and certain detachment [vairagya], this in turn enables one to view with a 'spirit of hushed expectancy and thrilled wonderment.'
3. To recognise what it is that causes us to experience separation, between objects between one being and another, a little introspection will reveal it is the sense of space e.g. the arm is felt a single unit as the shoulder and wrist are a continuous homogenous whole, whereas the fingers are felt, and known as separate, because of the distance in

between. **For this experience to transform into one of a single unit, the space and time concept must be compressed if not totally removed from the mind.** This is the vision of the Cosmic Man – Viraat Swarup. [this is the eye of divine knowledge]

4. Having seen this demonstration Arjuna is totally converted both in his faith and his understanding.
5. The exquisite dramatist that Vyaas is, he has “chosen the words and the mellifluous phrases, and the metrical dexterity as an effective strategy to heighten and clearly paint the emotions of wonderment, amazement, fear, reverence devotion etc., making it one of the highest philosophical poems in the world’s treasure of sacred books.”

Hard to select the shlokas, would encourage all to read the whole chapter, here however the poignant shlokas are presented.

Shloka 1

अर्जुन उवाच ।

मदनुग्रहाय परमं गुह्यमध्यात्मसञ्ज्ञितम् ।

यत्त्वयोक्तं वचस्तेन मोहोऽयं विगतो मम ॥ 1 ॥

Arjuna said: Thanks to the most profound words of spiritual wisdom that you have spoken out of kindness to me, this delusion of mine has entirely disappeared.

Shloka 4

मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो ।

योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दर्शयात्मानमव्ययम् ॥ 4 ॥

Krishna, if you think that it can be seen by me, then O Lord of yoga reveal to me Your imperishable form.

Arjuna for the first time admits he is no longer deluded regarding his duty after hearing from the Lord the various means of liberation and the wisdom of the practice of Karma yoga. Arjuna understands that the highest teaching has been given to him by grace and that knowledge, has dispelled the delusion he was suffering from. Swami Chinmayananda says removal of the delusion is one

aspect of the Truth, the second aspect being the direct experience of Truth for actual recognition and certainty.

He has attained the knowledge of the source of all manifestation and of the formless Brahman. Then again, he hears of the Divine glories from Shri Krishna Himself, naturally his heart finds no satiation, and he pleads with Shri Krishna to give him the *Darshan of this Form* of Divinity. Arjuna now addresses Shri Krishna as Parameshwar and Purshottama. If it is possible O Prabhu, Yogeshwar [power, majesty] for me to see then show me, reveal unto me

It was none other than Swami Vivekanand who had such a burning desire to see God that he asked every spiritual Guru he met whether they had seen God. Finally, he heard of Shri Ramakrishna and asked him the same question. Prompt came the reply “Yes indeed more clearly than I can see you!” Such authority comes to the one who has the experience of Truth. Once one has had even a glimpse of the Lord, he gets hooked, struggle as he might to fight free, he only gets more entangled in the bait- until he realises the Lord is the fisherman!

Shloka 5

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

पश्य मे पार्थ रूपाणि शतशोऽथ सहस्रशः ।

नानाविधानि दिव्यानि नानावर्णाकृतीनि च ॥ 5 ॥

Shri Bhagwan said: Arjuna behold My manifold, multifarious divine forms of various colours and shapes, in their hundreds and thousands.

Shloka 8

न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा ।

दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ॥ 8 ॥

But surely you cannot. See Me with these physical eyes of yours; therefore, I vouchsafe to you the divine eye. With this you behold My divine power of yoga.

Shri Krishna says- dekho- see My forms, in hundreds of thousands of different [naanaa] forms, colours, the revelation has not yet started till the divine sight is given to Arjuna. Here Shri Krishna is enumerating what will be seen- 12

Aditya, 8 Vasus, 11 rudras, 2 Ashwins, 49 Maruts all of these which have never been seen before [at the same time]- all manifestations of Ishvara!

Swami Rama has said that according to Yogic scriptures an adept with the help of meditation develops divine vision that gives him the capacity to behold the Universe. The kind of revelation Arjuna is fortunate to witness is impossible even to imagine what to say about the possibility of seeing. Yet, as Shri Krishna says in later discourses Jnana chakshu – eyes of wisdom can be developed by anyone through recognition of Brahman!

When the mind is led beyond concepts and conditionings and thereby transcends time and space and causation, it becomes the unfathomable and then the Universe gets revealed to him. The teacher, herein Shri Krishna, who is the Lord incarnate grants Arjuna divine vision such that Arjuna may be able to see within Him the whole Universe. This vision as Shri Krishna will explain later is not available to anyone, even if they perform austerities forever, or give charities or even pray!

The myriad colours, the uncountable classes of Beings, the three worlds and all that is manifest, and Shri Krishna tells Arjuna to also see whatever else he may wish to. This is in response to the weak Arjuna remarking in the early part of discourse 2, ‘we do not know whether we will lose or conquer.’ Shri Krishna invites him to look into the future as well! The vision is awesome and stunning leaving one dumbstruck, yet Arjuna finds the most poetic language in which to express It!

Shankara: Me- putting on the Universal Form. The Praakrita of Prakruti, natural, fleshy eyes of the earth, I give thee a divine eye, by which you will be able to see Me. By that eye behold My great miraculous power of Yoga, that which belongs to Me as Ishvara. The Lord’s manifestation of the Universal Form.

Shloka 9

सञ्जय उवाच ।

एवमुक्त्वा ततो राजन्महायोगेश्वरो हरिः ।

दर्शयामास पार्थाय परमं रूपमैश्वरम् ॥ ९ ॥

Sanjay said: My Lord! Having spoken thus, Shri Krishna, the Supreme Master of yoga forthwith revealed to Arjuna His supremely glorious divine form.

The description given by Sanjay to the blind king Dhritarashtra is incredibly glorious. Herein Sanjay says ‘O king, the wielder of great power [Yogeshwar] proceeds forthwith to show Arjuna the myriad forms in His body, wondrous sights, with faces everywhere. – [this Shankara explains depicts that Shri Krishna is looking from every face in the Universe - The One sustainer of this magnificent display.} And how does this wondrous sight seem? As though a thousand suns had risen in the horizon simultaneously. The splendour of the Universal Form is indescribable- simply awesome!

Shloka 15

अर्जुन उवाच ।

पश्यामि देवांस्तव देव देहे

सर्वास्तथा भूतविशेषसङ्घान् ।

ब्रह्माण्मीशं कमलासनस्थं

मृषींश्च सर्वानुरगांश्च दिव्यान् ॥ 15 ॥

Arjuna said: Lord, I behold within Your body all gods and hosts of different beings, Brahma throned on his lotus seat, Shiva and all Rishies and celestial serpents.

Swami Rama has discussed shlokas 15- 31 as a single sentiment of awe and fear that Arjuna expresses when he experiences the Divine Universal Form of Shri Krishna. The cosmic form both astonished and terrified Arjuna. He says, “O Lord I see in Your Cosmic body all the divine powers, the king of Gods- Brahma seated on the lotus, sages and serpents [Vasuki, and Shesha and others]”. As the description proceeds Arjuna not only sees the Lord is benevolent but also that He is the fire of annihilation. The wise accept the diversity of existence and embrace both the aspects of existence. It is only on the gross level of reality that there is this division of good/bad, kind/cruel, sin/virtue, pleasure/ pain!

When the mind turns inwards it encounters the inner dimensions of life, and one is astonished to see how distorted our perceptions are at the gross level of

consciousness. When the whole mind becomes the eye, it captures the vision of the subtle realms. The diversity which is seen on the gross level of consciousness, does not exist in the inner world because in the causal world, everything remains inseparably mingled! Prolonged association with the objects of the world creates attachment and obscures the vision of the whole but when the divine eye is opened the vision changes and the reality is experienced in an entirely different light. It is the raising of the Kundalini Shakti within which raises the consciousness of a sadhaka, as this is the Primal force.

Ekknathji reminds us that the same vision is given to Ma Yashoda when she gets hold of the naughty Bal Krishna and in fear, He opens His mouth and asks her to look... She beholds the Universe and this entire creation and realms.

To my mind the sages most definitely experience the totality of consciousness, may not be in this grand detail, as Shri Krishna Himself says no one has seen this Cosmic form much as they desire to. In this humble effort to look for the application of the song Divine in daily life, I find words do not do justice to such magnificence, that only Shri Vyaasa could describe and that too in the most glorious of languages Sanskrit! It is not only not possible sometimes it seems detrimental, to even attempt the same, as the grandeur would get lost. In the heart is felt deep humility and an obeisance arises such that encompasses all levels of inner consciousness- Jai Shri Krishna! Jai Shri Krishna!

Arjuna continues to first describe what he sees in awe and then this takes a turn for fear and apprehension as the wondrous vision unfolds, he finds it engulfs him and he is nonplussed. In the following shloka he expresses his utter confusion, dismay and terror. Somewhere though he is consoled, that it is the form of Shri Krishna and he could appeal to Him to explain.

Shloka 31

आख्याहि मे को भवानुग्ररूपो
नमोऽस्तु ते देववर प्रसीद ।
विज्ञातुमिच्छामि भवन्तमाद्यं
न हि प्रजानामि तव प्रवृत्तिम् ॥ 31 ॥

*Tell me who You are with a form so terrible? Obeisance to You O best of gods;
be kind to me. I wish to know You, the Primal Being, in particular; for I know
not what You intend to do.*

The terrified Arjuna now begs Shri Krishna to tell him who *is* He? Prasiida – begging for mercy, Arjuna bows to Shri Krishna and says - Vijnyaatuma icchhaami- I want to know, aadyam- the very first Being, for I know not na hi prajaanaami- your intention – pravruttim.

Shankara: Tell me who thou art, so fierce in form, I desire to know Thee the Original form. Have mercy. I know not indeed Thy doing.

The Lord's advent for destruction of worlds.

Shloka 32

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो

लोकान्समार्हर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः ।

ऋतेऽपि त्वां न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे

येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः ॥ 32 ॥

*Sri Bhagwan said: I am mighty Kaala (the eternal TIME spirit), the destroyer of
the worlds, I am out to exterminate these people. Even without you all these
warriors, arrayed in the enemies camp will die*

This is the shloka which has made the Bhagvad Geeta world famous. It was the shloka Robert Oppenheimer quoted when he saw the first atom bomb explosion over the desert sky. Kaala is a double-edged, word it means both Time and Death. Time is Death. As we grow older and see our fellow beings each fall to their death, each day becomes precious and a gift of God. Those who are sensitive feel this early and make it a tremendous motivation to walk the spiritual path and slay this monster of Time and Death. Eknath says his grandmother - spiritual teacher always insisted he attend every funeral and watch what is being done to the body from A- Z, again and again this opened a window onto death for him. Far from being morbid the reminder about death is the most positive mode- for then each moment we use with awareness and

dedicate ourselves even harder for liberation. There is then no time for jealousy, resentment, anger or being estranged. These are all worthless when we know we are here for a limited period of time and Kaala is waiting for us.

No wonder Arjuna was terrified - it seemed to him an awesome divinity stood before him, whose radiance dazzled the eyes and confounded the mind- he asks trembling, and Who are You? Shri Krishna reveals- He is Kaala- which means both Death and Time. It is not as though some God is wantonly, mercilessly killing all these great warriors, it simply indicates, their Karma had led them to this doom, and it was time for them to die in this manner. The law of Karma is most certainly working, even as much as gravity does- this is the Lord's power called Maaya. Therefore, this dreadful end is called upon by the warriors themselves. This fear is deep seated in every psyche- the fear of death and when would this Time come. Looking at the very embodiment of it [Kaala] must necessarily have sent shivers down Arjuna's spine. Yet, if we let our imagination move with the chapter- the glory of this vision shall stay with us and in a strange paradoxical way- take away the fear of death- for after all It is beyond comprehension, so the best recourse is surrender.

This was the shloka Oppenheimer the creator of the atom bomb quoted when he witnessed the test explosion of the atom bomb in July 1942, before it was used on Hiroshima, Nagasaki.* Oppenheimer besides being the great Physicist and mathematician he was, was also interested in metaphysics and is known to have studied the Sanskrit language so that he may be able to read the Bhagvad Gita in the original.

Shloka 33

तस्मात्त्वमुत्तिष्ठ यशो लभस्व
जित्वा शत्रून्भुङ्क्व राज्यं समृद्धम् ।
मयैवैते निहताः पूर्वमेव
निमित्तमात्रं भव सव्यसाचिन् ॥ 33 ॥

Therefore, do you arise and win glory; conquering foes, enjoy the affluent kingdom. These warriors already slain by Me; be you only an instrument, Arjuna.

Arjuna- [Savyasaachin is a great archer who can shoot arrows with both hands] and a devout friend and therefore Shri Krishna has selected him to be the nimittamatra- instrument [apparent cause] for slaying these great warriors like Bhishma and Karna, who were otherwise invincible. In this shloka Shri Krishna instructs Arjuna therefore to RISE up to the occasion.

Arjuna is terrified and confused and wants the clarification from Shri Krishna - as to His destructive powers. This should not be taken as cruelty for indeed it is the compassion of the Lord, who like a mother, will take a child to the surgeon, if he has an abscess to be removed, even if painful. Shri Krishna tells Arjuna- these are unrighteous people and need to be exterminated which I have set out to do. They should not be allowed to live or else they will rule unjustly and bring about the downfall of the world. So, get up and fight the righteous war for even without you consider them to be dead. Be thou only my instrument.

Ekknath: Arjuna sees the famous heroes arrayed against him on the battlefield, for us as well, these forces of darkness and destructive powers exist. Bhishma, Drona and Karna are mentioned for they were supposed to be invincible; yet the Lord assures Arjuna that they can be brought to an end, because they violate the unity of life. None of us therefore, can consider himself exempt, from the responsibility of joining battle against the forces of evil. One may join the forces of good by satyagraha (insistence on truth) as shown by Gandhiji or war as shown by Netaji. The sadhaka must be on the side of the righteous always.

There is a well-known Sanskrit phrase- Kaalaya tasmai namah. Obeisance to Time. Indeed, we are all creatures of time, until such time that we become creators of time and that, is possible. I always feel the richest person on earth is the one who has Time. The paradox is no one can claim to have it. We have seen many of our friends go some suddenly, and others after prolonged illnesses some in their youth, and others in extreme old age. Death is the one thing certain, if one is constantly aware of it, one can live more consciously. When people say- 'that is the best way to kill time', I wonder are we here to kill time or is time killing us? And should we not be finding means of how best to

live time, instead of just time-pass or kill time? Undoubtedly the best recourse is to find out who we are and thereby go beyond time.

Taking part in a righteous war is our moral duty, while we still believe in the concept of right and wrong and while we have to transact in this world. Drona, Karna, Bhishma exemplify our favourite concepts, which we are loathe to let go of, but to be one with the Supreme this is precisely what we have to do! What I feel is most of us, are not aware of the Truth, in this relative world and that foxes us. At such a time follow the heart and leave all analytical thinking. The battle of the gunas within us is always worth fighting making sattva win, for then and only then, will we defeat death and awaken to eternal life.

Note: Shloka 35 Shankara interprets why Sanjay is narrating this to Dhritarashtra. For Sanjay, experiencing this Visvarooपा, could revel in the Roopa, and not say anything, but instead, Sanjay tells all this to Dhritarashtra – where his beloved Duryodhana is not going to win the war, as all his supporters have been killed, and he is sure to die. Sanjay narrates all of this to Dhritarashtra, so that he will seek to make peace. Dhritarashtra is very weak willed and did not stop the war because he is blinded by his attachment to his son.

Shloka 36

अर्जुन उवाच ।

स्थाने हृषीकेश तव प्रकीर्त्या

जगत्प्रहृष्यत्यनुरज्यते च ।

रक्षांसि भीतानि दिशो द्रवन्ति

सर्वे नमस्यन्ति च सिद्धसङ्घाः ॥ 36 ॥

Arjuna said: Lord, well it is, the universe exults and is filled with love by chanting Your names, virtues and glory; terrified Rakshasas are fleeing in all directions, and all the hosts of Siddhas are bowing to you.

Listening to Shri Krishna telling him that his enemies are already slain, and that he should only be the instrument, for Dharma to be victorious, Arjuna is overwhelmed, when he faces his own inadequacies. Trembling with fear and

humility, he describes to Shri Krishna the glory that he sees in the Virat swarup of Shri Krishna. The devotee never stops singing the Lord's praises, as he cannot think anything else. The wicked run away from satsang, as their mind is attracted to objects of the senses and they feel threatened. Know however, **that both**, are a manifestation of the Lord and it is only by His will that the diversity exists. All that exists is Him, all that does not exist is Him, and all that is beyond is Him alone, says Swami Rama.

Ekknath: In his joy, Arjuna tells Shri Krishna that he sees the entire cosmos is rejoicing in the sovereignty of the Lord, and that "they can find their refuge only in You. You are everything that has been and ever will be the beginning and the end". All saints have similar experiences and in fact even the words used by them are similar, as they experience the Lord in every cell of their being. It is such a thrilling experience that their mere description of it makes us long to have it.

This is one of the shlokas included in the Saptashloki Gita, it expresses the joy of beholding the Cosmic form of the Lord. Groups of sages were singing the praises of the Lord and bowing, as indeed they should; while the demons were fleeing in all directions with the fear of death following them. All virtuous beings exulted in this glorious scene. Reading this chapter had indeed left me in a state of wonder bordering on stupefaction, when my imagination created the scene. Would there remain an I at all to experience this magnificence which is so overwhelming? The record can happen only from memory of the experience, while in it - the I must have exploded!

Shankara: When a man is overpowered with fear or with love, his eyes become full of tears, owing to the attack of pain or owing to the rise of joy: then his throat is choked up with phlegm, and this again causes indistinctness and dullness in speech. Thus did Arjuna speak in a stammering tone. Sanjaya's speech on this occasion is very significant. How? Sanjaya hoped that on seeing that his son would certainly be killed, for want of support if the unconquerable four, including Drona, should be killed by Arjuna, Dhrutarashtra might despair of success and bring about peace. Thus, he hoped there would be happiness to both. Even to this, Dhrutarashtra did not listen, owing to mighty Destiny.

Arjuna's adoration of the Cosmic form. This verse 36 may be also rendered so as to mean: The Lord is the proper object of delight and love, for the Lord is the Self of all and the Friend of all beings. Siddhas: such as Kapila. It is meant that such should be the case so far as Thou art concerned.

Sthane- all is in its right place, Arjuna has this insight, the world is excited and rejoices by your prakirti- your glory [the glory of Shri Krishna's cosmic form] All these Rakshasas having seen this form, are running away and all the siddha sanghas are bowing to You.

Shloka 37

कस्माच्च ते न नमेरन्महात्मन्

गरीयसे ब्रह्मणोऽप्यादिकर्त्रे ।

अनन्त देवेश जगन्निवास

त्वमक्षरं सदसत्तत्परं यत् ॥ 37 ॥

O great Soul, why should they not bow to You, who are the progenitor of Brahma himself and the greatest of the great? O Infinite, O Lord of celestials, O abode of the Universe. You are That which is existent (sat) that which is non-existent (asat) and also that which is beyond both viz the indestructible Brahman.

Arjuna goes on to extol the supremacy of Shri Krishna in the many verses that follow, for now he has understood Shri Krishna to be the 'be all and end all' of both existence and non-existence as well as beyond.

Shankara: The Hiranyagarbha. [Because Thou art the Mighty Being] therefore Thou art the proper object of delight and worship. Thou art the Supreme Being, as revealed in the Vedantas [Upanishads]. Thou art the Sat and the Asat. On account of the upadhis [conditions] which limit Akshara in appearance, He is spoken of as the Sat or the A-sat, the existent or non-existent. In reality, the Imperishable (Akshara) whom the Veda-knowers speak of transcends the Sat and the A-sat, and He is Thyself and none else.

As I wondered what truly is meant by sat and asat – it occurred to me that we study the origin of the Universe scientifically from data collected, through the light emitted millions of years ago, which took so much time to reach our highly

technically advanced telescopes! So, are they there now or are they not? And as a corollary are we existent right now or not? Or are we just manifesting now, we might even be a past event- mind boggling right? What's all the struggle about? In Truth we do not exist we only seem to do so- the divine seed is so planted that this has the potential to blossom and reveal the Truth- of the TIMELESS in time!

Arjuna's prayer for the Lord's forgiveness is in the verses 41/42 where Arjuna expresses his dismay at not having recognised the Lord, and addressed Him as a friend merely, and may have occasionally even been rude to Him.

Shloka 43

पितासि लोकस्य चराचरस्य
त्वमस्य पूज्यश्च गुरुर्गरीयान् ।
न त्वत्समोऽस्त्यभ्यधिकः कुतोऽन्यो
लोकत्रयेऽप्यप्रतिमप्रभाव ॥ 43 ॥

You are the father of this moving and unmoving creation. Nay, the greatest teacher worthy of adoration. O Lord of incomparable might in all the three worlds there is none else even equal to you; how then can anyone be greater than you?

Shankara: Thy equal exists not: for there cannot be two Ishvaras or Lords; if there were more than one Ishvara, the world could not get on as it now does. When even Thy equal exists not, how can there exist a being superior to Thee?

In shlokas 45/46 are Arjuna's prayer for the Lord's resumption of His usual form. Swami Rama has said there is nothing other than the Lord, all that is manifest is termed asat- because it is subject to change decay and death- the Lord is in it and that which is sat- the indestructible eternal, unborn undying, infinite is also the Lord. Arjuna formerly, addressed and treated Shri Krishna as a friend, now that he has seen this Cosmic form, Arjuna is overwhelmed with remorse and begs Shri Krishna to forgive him and assume the four-armed gentle form.

Shloka 47

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

मया प्रसन्नेन तवार्जुनेदं
रूपं परं दर्शितमात्मयोगात् ।
तेजोमयं विश्वमनन्तमादयं
यन्मे त्वदन्येन न दृष्टपूर्वम् ॥ 47 ॥

Shri Bhagwan said: Arjuna pleased with you I have shown you through my power of yoga this supreme effulgent primal and infinite cosmic form which has never been seen before by anyone other than you.

Swami Rama has said that this Darshan – Cosmic Vision – is not possible by any means such as rituals, doing good actions, penance, charity and so on. Yet the one who thinks of nothing other than the Lord and has no other attachment, or even the slightest craving for the objects of the senses, can attain this inner vision with the Grace of the Lord. So, two conditions need to be fulfilled 1. No means zero attachment to the world and only the thought of the Lord.

2. The Grace of the Lord.

When this happens, the unity underlying the universe and the different realms is experienced, thereby, this Cosmic Vision becomes a reality.

Shankara: The Lord praises that Form on the ground that 'Thou (Arjuna) shouldst be considered to have attained all thy ends by this vision of My Form.' Shri Krishna then continues to say, this form *cannot* be seen by anyone, not by the study of all the Vedas or intense austerity or rituals such as chandrayana, which consists of reducing one's meal by a morsel every day in the waning fortnight of the lunar month such that it reaches zero on the no moon night and then increasing it similarly, but being pleased with Arjuna He has shown it to him. "Now be not bewildered and see the human form you long to see which is so dear to you, with four arms, holding a conch, a discus and a club."

Shloka 51

अर्जुन उवाच ।

दृष्ट्वेदं मानुषं रूपं तव सौम्यं जनार्दन ।
इदानीमस्मि संवृतः सचेताः प्रकृतिं गतः ॥ 51 ॥

Arjuna said: Krishna seeing this gentle human form of yours I have regained my composure and am my own self again.

The overwhelmed Arjuna regains his composure on seeing the gentle form of Lord Vishnu, he feels profound gratitude at being singled and granted the divine vision to behold the Cosmic form of the Lord. The beatitude of that vision will remain imprinted on his heart forever and his balance is fully restored.

Shloka 52

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

सुदुर्दर्शमिदं रूपं दृष्टवानसि यन्मम ।

देवा अप्यस्य रूपस्य नित्यं दर्शनकाङ्क्षिणः ॥ 52 ॥

Shri Bhagwan said: This form of mine [with four arms] which you have just seen is exceedingly difficult to behold even the gods are always eager to see this form.

Shloka 53

नाहं वेदैर्न तपसा न दानेन न चेज्यया ।

शक्य एवंविधो द्रष्टुं दृष्टवानसि मां यथा ॥ 53 ॥

Neither by study of the Vedas, nor by penance, nor again by charity, nor even by rituals can I be seen in this form [with four arms] as you have seen Me.

Shloka 55

मत्कर्मकृन्मत्परमो मदभक्तः सङ्गवर्जितः ।

निर्वैरः सर्वभूतेषु यः स मामेति पाण्डव ॥ 55 ॥

Arjuna he who performs all his duties for my sake, depends on Me, is devoted to Me, has no attachment is free from malice towards all beings, reaches Me.

Shankara: Undistracted devotion (Bhakti) : that devotion which never seeks any other object except the Lord, and in virtue of which no object other than Vasudeva is cognized by any of the senses. By this sort of devotion, it is possible not only to know Me as declared in the sastras, but also to intuitively realise Me as I am, and to enter into Me, i.e., to obtain liberation.

The essence of the whole teaching of the Gita.

Now the essential teaching of the whole Gita-5astra which conduces to Highest Bliss will be summed up here, the teaching being such as everyone should follow:

“He who does works for Me, who looks on Me as the Supreme, who is devoted to Me, who is free from attachment, who is without hatred for any being, he comes to Me, O Pandava.

A servant works for his master, but he does not look upon that master as the highest goal for him to reach after death; but My devotee works for Me and also looks on Me as the Supreme Goal; I am his Supreme Goal. He is devoted to Me; he serves Me alone in all manner of ways, with his heart and soul. He is not attached to wealth, to progeny, to friends, to wife, to kinsmen, or to pleasures for them he has no attachment or love. He cherishes no feeling of enmity for any of the creatures, even though these latter may have done great injury to him. Such a man comes to Me. I am his highest Goal, and he seeks nothing else. This is the teaching I have to offer to thee O Pandava.”

*Oppenheimer recalled that, while witnessing the explosion, he thought of a verse from the Bhagavad Gita (XI,12): divi sūrya-sahasrasya bhaved yugapad utthitā yadi bhāḥ sadṛśī sā syād bhāsas tasya mahātmanaḥ

If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst at once into the sky, that would be like the splendour of the mighty one ...

Years later he would explain that another verse had also entered his head at that time: namely, the famous verse: "kālo'smi lokakṣayakṛtpravṛddho lokānsamāhartumiha pravṛttaḥ" (XI,32), which he translated as "I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds."

In 1965, he was persuaded to quote again for a television broadcast where he said:

“We knew the world would not be the same. A few people laughed, a few people cried. Most people were silent. I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita; Vishnu is trying to persuade the Prince that he should do his duty and, to impress him, takes on his multi-armed form and says, 'Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.' I suppose we all thought that one way or another.”

Summary: this glorious discourse is impossible for me. I would only like to say- Sarvam Brahmamayam re re.... sarvam brahma mayam.... Find one tiniest of the tiny particle where the Lord is not. Only to get that vision should be our aim and purpose of life.

Not so long ago, I used to feel wonderstruck at the description Shri Vyasa has given – no painter could ever do any justice to it, yet I never felt that I could relate to this Vision in any personal or practical sense. Only today [7.5.22] the following occurred to me as I ruminated over this discourse:

1. Arjuna was awestruck because he had been catapulted into a dimension beyond time where the past and future blended into a single unity.
2. We have gathered the concept from all texts and teachers that the entire manifest Universe is pervaded by the One Supreme Being- we learn this throughout Bhagvad Gita as well, but did we ever get the vision as in this discourse that this infinite Universe [scientifically we have not gauged the edge of it] is in Him? And He remains as infinite beyond as He is within. This reminds me of the oft quoted shloka from the Isha Upanishad which says

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।

पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

” THAT is infinite, THIS is infinite; From That, This comes. THIS added or removed from THAT, the Infinite remains as Infinite. Om, peace, peace, peace.” So as we behold the Universe, we see only Him. When asked ‘is there God?’ Swami Vivekanand said “there is Only God”

3. This then leads us into that Absolute Consciousness which is what we are.
4. The reason why Arjuna had been so blessed to receive this Cosmic Vision was because Arjuna had been primed in Discourses 7 and 9 on what the Lord Is and thus Arjuna was made ready for this vision. It is not an arbitrary manner in which the discourses are arranged, it is very precise. What also occurred to me, was that Shri Krishna keeps on repeating that he loved Arjuna and therefore bestowed this vision to

him. The reason for Arjuna being so very dear to Shri Krishna must be because in the face of annihilation he chose the Lord over all the world.

5. To receive this Cosmic vision or even to see the form of Lord Vishnu is extremely difficult if not impossible and yet in the end Shri Krishna assures us that the one who knows he is not separate [Ananya] from Shri Krishna enters Him that is he gets liberated.
6. Insights when we went into the experience of Arjuna: Difference between Jnana Chakshu and Divya Chakshu - the enlightened one with Jnana Chakshu recognises he pervades all, Divya Chakshu is granted to a rare few- Like Mother Yashoda, Hanumanji and Arjuna- to those most beloved to ISHWARA wherein the experience that All is in Him - the Lord.

We are all already in Him- in truth there is no separation, is recognised, understood and delighted in, duality drops. Is there anywhere to go? Anything to do? Is it not arrogance, impudence that causes us to believe – I am a separate individual, I need to merge in Him, I, I, I.

Grace is abounding, surrounding, timelessly flowing just removing the vimudhata (delusion), and that's IT.

Love is all there is – no I, you or all – all that is happening is experiencing no experience, no experiencer. {Guru Gita says – Jnyeyam sarvaswarupam cha jnyanam cha mana uchyate, Jnyananam jnyeya samam kuryan nanya pantha dvitika. Means the mind gets the knowledge of all [as separate] that which is known and knowledge are only one- that is the only way.} Even the question just happened.

Reflection and Exercises

1. What does Arjuna now crave for?
2. What is divine vision? Why did Shri Krishna give the divine vision to Arjuna? What if you got it?
3. What is the symbolic significance of four armed Vishnu Murthi? What appeals to you the most.
4. What is your deepest personal question and what do you think is the answer to that?
5. What is the difference between intellectual understanding and experiential? Discuss.
6. Summarise chapter 11.

Discourse 12 - Bhakti Yoga - The Yoga of Devotion

Having seen the glorious Vishvarup of Shri Krishna it is quite natural that Arjuna would want to worship the Lord with form, being overwhelmed with devotion. Now he has been listening intently to Shri Krishna expound Brahman the impersonal eternal Truth that forms the substratum of the Universe. The Lord has initiated him into the knowledge of both the Akshara Brahman [Indestructible Pure awareness] as well as Ishvara – the Supreme Being – the Universe being the body of the Lord, so very distant is His expanse and yet so intimately near as to be within oneself! In the Guru Gita there is a verse which expresses this- तदेजति तन्नैजति, तद्दूरे तत्समीपके । तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य, तदु सर्वस्य बाह्यतः ॥६२॥

Now, therefore Arjuna *would like to know which of the paths of worship is superior, is the worship of the Lord with a form superior to the worship of the one without form.* This doubt arises in the heart of Arjuna because from the beginning of the second discourse right up to the tenth which talks about the divine glories, Shri Krishna has taught the worship of the Supreme Self, the Imperishable[Akshara] Brahman, devoid of all upadhis [conditions] and here and there Shri Krishna has taught the worship of the Lord as Ishvara -the Lord of the Universe, associated with the upadhi [condition] of that energy [sattva] which has the power of carrying on all evolutionary process, and of knowing everything. In the eleventh discourse Shri Krishna has even shown Arjuna the Primal Form as Ishvara- manifesting as the whole Universe. Further Shri Krishna exhorts Arjuna to perform all work for the sake of the Lord alone- to be nimitta matra [an instrument alone] and so on.

This discourse addresses this doubt and although Shri Krishna says right at the beginning it is easier for the embodied being to worship a form than to imagine an unmanifest underlying imperishable reality, when he goes on to qualify what that Bhakti should be like- it does not seem quite so easy after all!

Shloka 1

अर्जुन उवाच ।

एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।

ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥ 1 ॥

Arjuna said: The devotees exclusively and constantly devoted to You in the manner stated just earlier, adore You as possessed of form and attributes, and those who adore as the Supreme Reality only the indestructible unmanifest Brahma [Truth Knowledge and Bliss solidified] of these two types of worshippers who are the best knowers of Yoga?

As we imbibe the teachings of the Lord through the discourses a deep reverence arises for the personal aspect of the Divine and one longs to worship this Lord who is the embodiment of Brahman! The Guru Gita begins with Ma Parvati the symbol of purity, innocence and devotion humbly asking Shiva the epitome of Knowledge and Truth [Satchidanand] “Kena margena bho swamin dehi brahmamayo bhavet?” By what path can an embodied being become one with Brahman? The love Arjuna must feel after the Vishvaroop Darshan is hard to put in words, and he now only longs to be united with the Lord. This indeed is the ultimate possibility- by trusting only our senses, [mind included] and accepting them as the only means of Knowledge, is much like having a marvellous body, with infinite possibilities, and using only a little finger to go through life! The reason for this given is - that is all I know. What a pathetic situation[krupana]

Even science has been trying to reach the Unity of existence. Einstein when asked how he discovered the formula of relativity, simply answered “By questioning an established axiom.” Thus, we need to question the axiom that the physical is all there is! As Spinoza has put it “the finite rests on the bosom of the Infinite” don’t we want to explore? When we address mundane difficulties even of health by addressing only their physical basis, we miss the point e.g. bariatric surgery for overeating. Eknath says – we are not what our DNA rolls out. One can change the expression of our DNA the key being meditation. Bruce Lipton a cell biologist is worth reading, he explains epigenetics a science which proves we are not victims of our genes.

One naturally wonders, while understanding that, indeed all of this is Brahman, including me, how may I relate to this most Divine revelation? I just want to gape in awe and stare at His glorious form – must I instead withdraw and try to experience the formless Reality?

Shankara: Engaged in duty without intermission, dedicating every action with a steadfast mind to the Lord, these devotees seeking no one other than Thee as their refuge, meditating on Thy Universal form, are the one kind and then there are others who having renounced action, meditate on the Imperishable Brahman, the unmanifest [avyakta] as the root of the manifest [vyakta] without attributes – who of these two classes of sadhakas is better?

Shloka 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।

श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥ २ ॥

Shri Bhagwan said: I consider them to be the best yogis who endowed with supreme faith and ever united through meditation with Me worship Me with their mind centred on Me.

Most people cannot fathom the idea of meditation on an indestructible impersonal substratum, beyond time and space Brahman, as the underlying reality, is Shri Krishna's immediate response.

Shankara: Those devotees who fix their minds on Me in the Universal Form, and worship Me as the Supreme Lord, free from the *umam* [parblindness-lacking in vision, insight, understanding] of attachment, contemplate Me steadfastly endowed with supreme faith, these are the best yogins. Indeed, they pass their days and nights in incessant thought of Me, it is therefore proper to speak of them as the best yogins.

The worshippers of Akshara also come to Me alone- ever contemplating the Imperishable, Unthinkable and Indefinable Unmanifest, Immutable, and eternal having restrained all their senses, always equanimous, serving all evenly.

In shlokas 3-4 Shankara says because the Akshara is unmanifest, He is not accessible to words and cannot therefore be defined. He is unmanifest to any of the organs of knowledge. They contemplate the Imperishable everywhere, all round. Contemplation (Upasana) consists in approaching the object of worship, by way of meditating according to the teaching [shastra], and dwelling

for a long time steadily in the same thought [continuous] like a ribbon of oil descending. The Imperishable is qualified thus- He is omnipresent, pervading all like the aakaash, He is unthinkable, because He is unmanifest. Whatever is visible to the senses can be thought of by the mind also, but the Akshara is invisible and is therefore unthinkable. He is unchangeable – Kutastha – Kuta also means good to all appearance, but evil within- like the seed of sansar – including Avidya- ignorance. *Thus, Akshara means He who is seated in Maya as its witness* {this kind of definition is termed, tatastha lakshana, since the attribute-less, cannot be defined, it has only to be indicated.} *The goal of Akshara is very hard for the embodied to reach, for those who are attached to their bodies, because of the necessity to give up this attachment. Their trouble is therefore greater. Therefore, Salvation by worship of Ishvara is easier.*

Shloka 6

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्परः ।
अनन्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥ 6 ॥

Shloka 7

तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।
भवामि नचिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥ 7 ॥

On the other hand, those depending exclusively on Me, and surrendering all actions to Me, worship Me (God with attributes), constantly meditating on Me with single minded devotion, them, Arjuna I speedily deliver from the ocean of birth and death, their minds being fixed on Me.

Swami Rama: Has summarised as follows:

Sri Krishna integrates the paths of devotion and knowledge. Seeing Arjuna's conflict in regard to Saguna and Nirguna practices Sri Krishna states:

The Lord is the one single and highest goal of life.

Contemplate and meditate upon the one truth without a second.

Concentration of the mind should not be on any object other than the Lord.

The entire sadhana of the aspirant is to be directed to the Lord alone;

All the faculties of the mind, including buddhi, should be directed toward the Lord alone;

Dedicate all your actions and the fruits thereof to the Lord alone;

Be a yogi identify yourself with your essential nature instead of with the world.

When the aspirant realises his essential nature and performs his duties skilfully, he remains free from attachment and is liberated. In the modern times, our identity is itself defined as name, gender, inheritance, education etc- which led us to believe in our accumulations as self. This false identification needs to be merged at the feet and into the Lord, for liberation through the path of Bhakti.

Ekknath explains in great detail quoting many saints such as St. Augustine, St. Teresa and the Sufi saints who have all expressed their longing for union with the Lord and at the same time the anguish of let go. Finally, when the pull of the Lord is overpowering the let go of desire happens. He expresses the dilemma beautifully when he says “Yes, Lord I would like to go forward- just as long as I can stay here too!” The dynamics are simple, but when through meditation we go deeper and deeper into our personality we find it extremely hard to give up attachment. As long as we hold on to the passing pleasures of the world we cannot avoid suffering. *In the first half of life you may have a choice of renouncing voluntarily*, that which life is anyway going to take away, and in that renunciation, is the suffering of old age and death, if attachment is given up totally.

Shri Krishna tenderly leads us through these verses from death to immortality. For the embodied being it is very difficult to contemplate the formless. Even the Guru Gita begins with a verse where Parvati bowing humbly to Shiva atop Mount Kailash pleading for grace asks, “By which path is an embodied one to be united with Brahman.” By embodied is meant the one attached to and identified with the body.

Shri Krishna is telling us here that the one who transcends the attachment to the physical appearance, by firmly holding on to Me (even if it be an appearance) verily, attains Me. The path of Bhakti seems easy, for we lull ourselves into the belief that while we are holding onto the sansar with one hand, we can hold onto the Lord with the other. This leads us and helps us through many a trying time but does not liberate us from fear and suffering. It is only when we love the Lord, to the exclusion of all else and hold onto His feet with both hands, come what may, do we attain union with Him (Brahman). That is an immensely challenging ask for again, unless we leave the foothold we are on, we cannot progress.

The famous doha of Kabir ‘Dukh mey sab sumiran kare, sukh mey kare na koi, sukh mey jo sumiran kare to dukh kahe ko hoy.’ [All contemplate me in sorrow none in happiness, if in happiness I am remembered, why will there be sorrow?'] A lady asked this question, “in my case I remember the Lord only in happiness, in sorrow I forget.” In answer to that Swami Sarvapriyananda said, “that only indicates the satisfaction you have received from material comforts, and hence remembrance disappears when the situation is unpleasant. It is not true remembrance.” On mulling over the answer, I realised there was great truth in that, yet, Saint Kabir has said just the opposite, what must he, have meant? Dwelling deeply the insight arose, ‘if one finds joy/happiness **only** in the name of the Lord, does it matter whether there is rain or sunshine? Whether the situation is a happy or sad one? One would always be immersed in the name of the Lord filled with joy and contentment.’ The ordinary way of looking at it is, the Lord will be pleased and no sorrow will come to you [this does not seem logical though.]

For Bhakti to be intense and true we have to get over human foibles. I only now notice how anger had become a habit pattern hard to overcome because of justifications, supplied by the ego, immediately. How easy it is to hurt others, how difficult to control the ego- once however, it is seen from the inside the tendency remains for a while, but the sting is gone. So, with understanding and practice any impurity can be overcome- this is called emotional purification which is a kind of prerequisite, for true progress in meditation.

Story of muhlapudee: The knowledge that we only hurt ourselves when we hurt others came as an insight when one day super idlis were made and I ate quite a few relishing them with mulhapudee [gunpowder- meaning a spicy powder] and the next morning experienced intense burning at the exit passage! I realised what tasted delicious at the tongue was ever so detrimental in just another part of me! So, when I fire another in ignorance, I am hurting myself albeit at another time and place
And will experience the same fire!

Shloka 9

अथ चित्तं समाधातुं न शक्नोषि मयि स्थिरम् ।
अभ्यासयोगेन ततो मामिच्छाप्तुं धनञ्जय ॥ ९॥

If you cannot steadily fix the mind on Me, Arjuna, then seek to attain Me through the Yoga of practice.

Sri Krishna says: Try, try till you succeed at last. Work hard and practice. Nothing about sadhana - meditation is easy and if the Buddha took 7 years to be Self realised - we may need 70! Even when we watch a wonderful ballet performance and how effortless it seems, one can realise the practice that has gone into it. Training, training which takes years and to maintain the same level again more training. No day can one say, 'i don't feel like it today.' The same is true about training the mind in meditation. There are taught tendons in the mind too which need to be relaxed. Eknath says when it comes to Self-realisation put everything aside and make it the priority, then the rest falls in place. He gave up working for All India Radio, because it clashed with his meditation and sadhana time. He read Sri Ramakrishna and other sages when it was time to go to the theatre or any such recreation. He had a burning desire to attain and so he did. The key word is 'abhyasa' and that means training the attention. This is the secret of gaining control. Once we have the power to direct our attention to what we choose we become what we put our attention to, and that is the ultimate goal. When attention darts from object to object it is out of control. To bring it under control one should bring it back whenever it wanders and repeat our mantra. Attention is like a search light and although it seems like it is stuck, only on one or other object, it can be turned and turned inwards too. We have many impurities in our emotions and each of these is vying for our attention, and when they are starved of this attention, they beat a retreat for no actors want to play before an empty house. So not only do we have to practice but add to that doing action selflessly and not to crave the fruit of actions. The freedom one then experiences is immeasurable.

To steadily fix the mind on Shri Krishna might have been easy when He was embodied so graceful, so charming, so attractive, with such a lissom body, lovely teeth and eyes that had the light of the sun penetrating as He looked into our own! I think of Him thus and find- why it is easy even now if we let our imagination create. Meerabai was not a contemporary of Shri Krishna but totally immersed in Him. Yet Sri Krishna here so tenderly says if you cannot do this then do the practice - of meditation is implied. Now actually sadhana is extremely difficult if not done with devotion- it is like trying to light a lamp

without oil. It lights for a moment and burns the wick. For steady practice devotion and surrender are a must- there is no either/or, and just to get us to start, Shri Krishna is luring us onto the path to find true peace, happiness and love.

Shankara; In the last shloka Shri Krishna has said fix thy mind, thy purposes and thoughts, thy Buddhi also which resolves and determines in Me, the Lord in the Universal form. The result of this will be – thou shalt without fail abide in Me as Myself, on the death of this body. If you cannot fix your mind in the manner mentioned, then seek thou to reach Me through the yoga of repeated practise- Abhyasa Yoga. Practice consists in withdrawing the mind from all quarters and repeatedly fixing it on a particular object, it means samadhana (focus) and steadfastness of mind. The shloka is Ekasmin [on the one] alambane [object of meditation- to hang onto] sarvataha samaahrutya [withdrawing your attention from any other distraction] punaha punaha sthapanah [establish it again and again.]

Shloka 10

अभ्यासेऽप्यसमर्थोऽसि मत्कर्मपरमो भव ।

मदर्थमपि कर्माणि कुर्वन्सिद्धिमवाप्स्यसि ॥ 10॥

If you are unequal even to the pursuit of such practice, be intent to work for Me; you shall attain perfection, (in the form of My realisation) even by performing actions for My sake.

According to Eknath meditation alone is not enough. He calls the course ‘meditation and allied disciplines.’ For example, instead of going for the movies if we choose to visit a sick friend or do some such action that brings joy to another being, we find that when we meditate our attention does not wander. But of course the action must be done cheerfully, strangely then one will find that it brings, cheer to oneself also. Eventually, it is all about destroying the ego- this can be done in two ways: 1. Via Negativa- by direct assault as the mystics of yore did. 2. Via Affirmativa - by contributing to another’s welfare as today we have to live in the world. It does not mean saying yes to everything another is wanting to do- that might be harmful to the other person but being able to say ‘no’ tenderly but firmly. Summing the attitude, one can only quote a western mystic who said, ‘be kind, be kind, be kind.’ What keeps us from

practising this is **Sanskara, defined as a compulsion, a rigid, automatic response to life which we think is a permanent part of a person's character.** This stems from a habit pattern, set since several years or even lifetimes. All of this can be changed by vigilant attention and keeping the goal in mind, e.g. anger. - use the mantra and go for a walk. Especially when one decides firmly - 'i am never going to be angry,' the ego responds, 'says who?' And presents before you immediate opportunities, when your attention is scattered.

One needs to develop Sankalpa Shakti for any practice. To do that one should take small practical resolutions - like giving up a favourite food for a specific period of time or taking up a practice of say 10 malas[rosary of 108 beads] a day for a year without fail. This not only develops Sankalpa Shakti it benefits us by forming good habits, as otherwise one is unable practice diligently. However, Shri Krishna says - if you are not able to practice meditation you can attain Satchidananda, by performing all your actions for My sake. Just every action we do we can say Krishnarpanamastu.

All my life I have done everything for myself; I have never done anything for anyone else. Something within me tells me, that is precisely what everyone else does too, but under the mask of helping others- if that is what gives them happiness, they are doing it for their own happiness is it not? Finally, that is at the root, used to be my conclusion, for I saw most of the time people did things for others as the others might sometime be useful to them in the future, or out of fear of what people might think and so on. In the Upanishad the sage Yagnyavalkya says: *Na va arey patyuh kamaya patih priyo bhavati, atmanas tu kamaya patih priyo bhavati; na va arey jayayai kamaya jaya priya bhavati; atmanas tu kamaya jaya priya bhavati; na va arey sarvasya kamaya sarvam priyam bhavati; atmanas tu kamaya sarvam priyam bhavati* (Bri.U. 2.4.5): Nobody loves anything for its own sake. Here is a masterstroke of genius from Yajnavalkya, the great sage: **Nobody loves anything for its own sake, love is not between object and subject for there is only the ONE therefore love is for the Self alone!**

At the mundane level it was only when I watched my father carefully, I realised what kindness was. He never shirked his duty, always attended the sick, even when the hospital was far away, he took a bus, it did not matter if the relative

was a close one or not and many such instances showed me, there is true kindness in this world. He truly saw the Lord in all mankind. His life's motto was service to man is service to God. It does not have to be giving financial help alone. That is the easiest charity. If I had known kindness leads to Self-realisation- I might have been more vigilant.

Shankara: Even if thou doest actions for My sake without practising yoga, thou shalt attain perfection, thou shalt first attain purity of mind, then yoga or steadfastness, then knowledge, then perfection- Moksha.

Shloka 11

अथैतदप्यशक्तोऽसि कर्तुं मद्योगमाश्रितः ।

सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं ततः कुरु यतात्मवान् || 11 ||

If, taking recourse to My realisation, you are unable to do even this, then, subduing your mind, and intellect etc. relinquish the fruit of all actions.

Swami Rama takes all 3 shlokas together. Arjuna is asking the question about Saguna and Nirguna Brahman on the behalf of us all. He has just had the Vishvarup Darshan and is totally taken up with the Sagun Brahma. Shri Krishna says the first step is 'abhyasa' which means practice and discipline. One has to repeatedly bring the mind to do sadhana, regularly and maintain a routine with discipline. This may be difficult in case there is an accident or ill health, but it should be kept as your priority. If this is not possible then dedicate every action at the feet of the Lord. Every simple action such as eating, sleeping, doing daily work- this will ensure you are attuned to the Lord throughout the day. If even this is not possible for you, just surrender the fruits of all action at the feet of the Lord. When you practice again and again, you will slowly find yourself getting detached, from the fruits of action and eventually you will become desireless. This is so because the reason one does any action is because he is attached to the fruits. So habitually if you surrender the fruit, you will become free.

Gita is a call to action but a call to selfless action. Once it is clear that the action is for the benefit of all just do your best and leave the rest. When one does selfless action, worry makes no sense at all, because that makes us less effective and besides it is futile. Eknath gives his own example- when he set up

the Blue Mountain Meditation Centre- there were many challenges, he faced them all with equanimity because he was not doing it for any selfish reason and he had surrendered at the feet of Shri Krishna- so it was not “my work” he says. Therefore, it has to prosper. In such work either the difficulty is surmounted or proves to be an opportunity to learn.

In my youth I never understood how anyone could ever perform an action without expecting or wanting the fruit thereof. It seemed like an impossible task and I felt then one would not perform action with any skill or passion. How wrong I was, I realised, only quite recently. The fruit of the action as we have seen in Chapter 2 is never in our hands, there are too many factors which determine any outcome so why not primarily accept that, once done we offer the fruit at the feet of the Lord and quit worrying about it. This saves our mental energy, and we can focus better at what we are doing, doing the act with skill and devotion offers in itself a tremendous reward such that the fruit no longer matters, and the attitude guarantees a good result.

Shloka 12

श्रेयो हि ज्ञानमभ्यासाज्ज्ञानाद्ध्यानं विशिष्यते ।

ध्यानात्कर्मफलत्यागस्त्यागाच्छान्तिरनन्तरम् ॥ 12 ॥

Knowledge is better than practice without discernment, meditation on God is superior to knowledge, and renunciation of the fruit of actions is superior even to meditation; for peace immediately follows renunciation.

Sri Krishna is comparing the paths and asserts that if all other practices like - meditation, and knowledge, and practice of non- attachment are difficult he should simply surrender the fruits of his action at the feet of the Lord. If dedicating the fruit of action is not possible then no path can be useful to the sadhaka. Dedication of the fruit brings peace immediately.

Here knowledge and surrender are not watertight compartments, after all where there is knowledge of unity there is love. But better than mechanical practice- is knowledge. Initially all practice is mechanical whether it is mantra recitation or meditation, for these to be filled with devotion the self-will should be very thin indeed, that means the ego has receded. Later when the practice becomes regular, steady and constant, love creeps into the practice and that is

the advent of jnana. Slowly the bewitching illusion of separateness called maya can be seen through. As we progress on the path the question 'what can I get?' dissolves and one starts to ask, 'what can I give?' After many years of practice we begin to love. Once that happens, peace that passeth all understanding, lights our every cell and the ego can no longer haunt us- Eknath.

It is indeed quite difficult in the beginning to make it a practice to meditate, at the same time every day, and to repeat the mantra. It feels very mechanical and uninteresting to the point of being boring sometimes. Yet when we persist we find we start liking what we repeatedly do because such is the mind. It likes repetition. We also find that the benefits of meditation carry forward into the activities of the day. We experience many events of synchronicity and serendipity. A quiet wonder starts to grip us even though the practice itself may still be fraught with struggle. It is however, only when we surrender the fruit of any action that we experience peace- and this is immediate, for once we have truly surrendered does it matter what happens? This has happened to me when I underwent an excision of a breast lump and another time when I had some spots removed from the face suspected to be cancer. I did not for a moment worry what the outcome was going to be. The pathologists who were friends anxiously phoned as soon as they could which was like 4-5 days later confirming that it was benign. I had not lost a wink of sleep. Nothing matters once the fruit is relinquished, one must do one's best however, otherwise there is a lingering doubt 'could I have done it any other way?' when one surrenders the fruit of action done skilfully and to the best of one's ability, one finds that desire for objects slowly fades for was it not the habit pattern of the mind to crave the result of action? That having been surrendered, the craving loses its grip and peace pervades the being!

Note: aham karta iti bhavana= ahamkara [ego- I do].

Shankara: Knowledge[jnana] is better than practice [abhyas] accompanied with ignorance – meaning mechanical practice. Dhyaan [meditation] with knowledge is better than only knowledge [jnana], better still is the abandonment of the fruits of action. From such an abandonment of the fruits of action, cessation of samsara and the cause thereof [ignorance] follows immediately, without delay.

Abandonment of the fruits of action is taught as a means to Bliss in the case of an ignorant person engaged in action, only when unable to tread the paths taught before, but not at first. Abandonment of desire for the fruits of actions, is the factor which when accompanied with Karmayoga leads to bliss, even for an ignorant man. Arjuna is advised to follow this path, as he is a man of action and as yet not enlightened. Here, it is by presupposing a distinction between Ishvara and Atman, the Lord and the Self, that yoga which consists in concentrating on the Lord, with the Universal Form and the performance of works for the sake of the Lord have been taught.

Karma yoga is not meant for the worshipper of Akshara i.e. for him who sees no distinction [between the Lord and the Self]. Similarly, the Lord shows the impossibility of the worship of the Akshara to a Karma yogin. The worshipper of Akshara is independent as regards attainment of liberation [Kaivalya-Oneness].

The others are dependent on the Lord, on an external Being. If these were deemed as the very Self they would be the very Akshara themselves owing to their realization of this identity so that it would be inappropriate to speak of them as persons to be delivered by the Lord. Moreover, the Lord who is pre-eminently a well-wisher of Arjuna recommends to him Karma Yoga based on an idea of distinction and quite dissociated from right knowledge. This is known as adhikara bheda - i.e. the distinction of sadhana given to different sadhakas depending on their level of understanding.

It is with reference to the worshippers of the Akshara, to the sanyasins who are devoted to right knowledge and have abandoned all desires that he proceeds to teach further attributes- such as 'absence of hatred of any being' – which form the direct means to immortality. Shloka 13/14.

There is another reason why Karma yoga cannot be combined with Akshara-Upasana in one and the same person at one and the same time, because the attributes mentioned below cannot, all of them be cultivated by the followers of Karma, who are ignorant of the Self.

Shloka 13

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ 13 ॥

Shloka 14

सन्तुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा दृढनिश्चयः ।

मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मदभक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ 14 ॥

He who is free from malice towards all beings, friendly and compassionate, and free from the feelings of 'I' and 'mine', balanced in joy and sorrow, forgiving by nature, ever-contented and mentally united with Me, nay, who has subdued his mind, senses and body, has a firm resolve, and has surrendered his mind and reason to Me- that devotee of Mine is dear to Me.

To attain perfection, the ego has to be transcended and there are primarily two ways this can happen. One is through Jnana of who am I? As taught by Shri Krishna in discourse 2 and identifying with Brahman. The second by Bhakti – devotion – through devotion the seeker merges his ego at the feet of the Lord of Life. To the enlightened being all these qualifications come as a natural course, do not have to be developed or cultivated, but for the seeker these qualities have to be brought into daily life, to enable equanimity through purification of the mind. The very first is adveshta sarvabhutanaam- means – no malice towards any being. This is hard to practice but when one tries to listen attentively to an irritating adversary, who is also sometimes a goody two shoes, one realises that what is being said is irritating but the person is not, the person is in fact quite lovable. Further one discovers that there is some truth in what the person is saying – *there is a strange liberation from one's own judgements and opinions. Try it.*

When one knows even intellectually that all is Brahman- sarvam khalu idam Brahma- what then belongs to me? What is mine? Even I am His alone! Practicing this maybe even harder because we so identify with this body, that we feel separate and it is this feeling of being separate, that leads to fear- so it is only in one's own interest to experience the interconnected matrix of which we are all a part *and the whole too!*

The rest of the attributes follow as surely as a shadow when the ego is transcended.

Shankara: He who hates no single being, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from attachment and egoism, to whom pain and pleasure are

equal, who is enduring, ever content, and balanced in mind, self-controlled and possessed of firm conviction, whose thought and reason are directed to Me, he who is thus devoted to Me is dear to Me. He hates nothing, not even that which causes him pain. He regards all beings as himself. He is friendly and compassionate. He is full of compassion for the distressed, he has offered security of life to all beings, he is a sanyasin. He does not regard anything as mine and is free from egoism, the notion of I.

Pain and pleasure do not cause in him hatred and attachment. He remains unaffected when abused or beaten. He is always content he thinks he has enough whether he obtains or not the means of bodily sustenance. He is satisfied whether he comes by a good thing or not. He is a yogin always steadfast in thought and has a firm conviction regarding the essential nature of the Self. This sanyasin has directed to Me exclusively his Manas[mind], purposes and thoughts as well as his Buddhi the faculty of determining. Such a devotee is dear to Me. The same truth which was indicated in Discourse 7 Shloka 17 "I am very dear to the wise man and he is very dear to Me," is described at length here.

From Shloka13 to 20 Shri Krishna enumerates 36 qualities of a devotee who is extremely dear to Him, and these are as follows:

1.Adveshta sarvabhutanam- hates no single being, 2.maitrah- friendly, 3.karuna-compassionate, 4.nirmama-non-possessive, 5.nirahankara-egoless, 6.samdukhasukha equanimous, 7.kshami-forgiving, 8.santushtahstatam-always content, 9.yatama-disciplined,10.drdhanischayah-determined, 11.mayarpit-manobuddhi-surrendered to Me mind and intellect, 12. dvijate loko disturbed or afraid – loko-people 13.lokanodvijate world not afraid of him,14.harsha -aamarsha mukto- free in joy and suffering, 15.bhaya mukto fearless, 16.anapekshaya-not expecting, 17.shuchi-pure, 18.daksh-skilled, 19.udasina-indifferent, 20.gatvyatah- gata one whose inner suffering has gone 21.sarvarambha paritygai -renouncing all undertakings , 22.bhaktimanyayah-full of devotion,23.na hrushyati-does not get excited, 24.na dveshti-no aversion, 25.na kankshati-desireless, 26.shubhashubha parityagi renouncing all that is auspicious/inauspicious, 27.bhaktimanyaha-devoted, 28. samah shatruacha mitrah - friend and foe alike, 29.manaapamanah praise and blame alike, 30.shitoshna heat and cold alike,31. sukha-dukha- joy and sorrow alike, 32.sangavivarjitah-devoid of attachment, 33.tulya-ninda-stuti treats equally

glory and criticism, 34.mauni-silent, santushtaha -fulfilled, 35.aniketah-without an abode, 36.sthirmatih-stable intellect.

Now tell me is Bhakti easy?

Shloka 20

ये तु धर्म्यामृतमिदं यथोक्तं पर्युपासते ।

श्रद्धधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥ 20 ॥

Those devotees, however, who partake in a disinterested way of this nectar of pious wisdom set forth above, endowed with faith and solely devoted to Me, they are extremely dear to Me.

Eknathji has elaborated on this discourse with many an exemplary story, talking of true love and devotion beyond the little self which can and does exist. He also says though that wisdom and Jnana are most important, for after all you must know where you are going or else like the title of a book he read, said: *If you don't know where you are going, you will probably end up somewhere else!* That is what Shri Krishna is doing throughout the Bhagvad Gita- detailing the journey and the destination and gently reminding us 'do you know where you are going? These are the landmarks, stay on the road which leads you within.' Throughout this discourse, Shri Krishna defines the devotee who is exceedingly dear to Him. As the characteristics of such a devotee are enumerated, I would try and look how many of them are in me? It became clear that while there were some, there was a long way to attain them all. Yet, the encouraging fact is that even if one has just the one characteristic in toto, one has them all! That insight has led me to select one which is most compatible with my Prakruti - being vigilant every moment.

Shankara: They are the sanyasins as enumerated above from shloka 13, looking up to Me as the Supreme whose highest unsurpassed goal is Myself, the Imperishable Self. Resorting to the highest devotion which consists in the knowledge of the Supreme Reality- that which was implied in the words "I am exceedingly dear to the wise man and he is exceedingly dear to Me" has been explained at length here and concluded here thus: They are exceedingly dear to Me because, he who follows the Immortal Law, which has been now described becomes exceedingly dear to Vishnu the Supreme Lord, therefore

this Immortal Law should be zealously followed by every seeker of liberation, by everyone who desires to the Supreme abode of Vishnu.

Summary: *It is hard for an embodied [one who identifies with the body] being to conceive of an Impersonal, Akshara Brahman.*

Ishvara is the highest intellectual concept of the Truth; it is easier to relate to Him in any form. The one attached to a form worships the one with a form and finally merges in Him.

Complete surrender has many qualifications although it begins with the premise that you are separate, it ends with the experience of union.

To practice Devotion Knowledge is vital. For if one does not know where one is going one loses direction. The steps enumerated- are Ananya Bhakti- which really is the ultimate, fixing the Buddhi only in the thought of the Lord, if that is not possible- Abhyasa, then surrender every action and the best of all surrender the fruit of actions which eventually leads to desireless-ness and Annaya Bhakti.

Bhakti seems like the easiest path for there is no abstract intellectual understanding, besides even this has eventually to be transcended on the path of knowledge. However, as they say appearances are deceptive and Bhakti is not as easy as it seems.

Karma yoga and Bhakti yoga go hand in hand whereas Jnana marga is difficult to practise and requires intense, one pointed attention.

The devotee endears himself to the Lord by the 36 qualities given above. These follow naturally on enlightenment but need to be practised by the unenlightened.

A story of Kabir comes to mind who was both a Jnani and a Bhakta. He had heard of a certain woman saint- Janabai through her many poignant poems all depicting her profound Bhakti. He had an intense desire to meet her; he therefore travelled the distance to her village and on being informed that she might be at the riverbank proceeded there. He found there, two women arguing regarding the cow dung cakes made by them. Janabai was one of them. He could not imagine that such a great saint could be involved in this squabble,

so he asked what was the cause? Janabai answered that the lady was claiming this heap of cow dung cakes to be hers, while actually they belonged to her. The lady claimed the same, they asked him to decide- he put his hands up and said there's no way he could. Janabai answered 'why? Just put each cake to your ear and listen if you hear the name of 'Vithal' it belongs to me.' True to her word each and every cake had the music of the name Vithal in it! He fell at her feet and such then is the Union with Ishvara!

Reflection and Exercises:

1. *What is easier Saguna Bhakti or Nirguna and why? Ref. beginning shlokas.*
2. *What is Upasana? Give your experience of it.*
3. *What is the easiest approach to the Lord?*
4. *What are the qualities of a true Bhakta?*
5. *Who is dearest to Shri Krishna?*
6. *Do you practice subjective or objective meditation and why?*
7. *Debate: Concepts are helpful for awakening to the Truth.*
8. *What is your favourite shloka in chapter 12 and why? Please select only one.*
9. *Summarise the discourse under the following Key words:*
 - a. *Upasana*
 - b. *Abhyaas*

**Discourse 13 - Kshetra Kshetrajnya
Vibhag Yoga - The Yoga of discrimination
between the Field and the knower of the
field.**

The thirteenth discourse once again reverts to Jnana as we have seen before, the first six discourses pointed to ‘who you are’ – Tvam, the next six discourses on Tat- who the Lord is and now in the next six discourses the ‘ISNESS’ is discussed, as also how to BE. Looked at in another way the first six discourses primarily focused on Karma yoga, the second six clearly on Bhakti and now the shift is distinctly on Jnana yoga.

Shri Krishna, O Shri Krishna ever so compassionate, after elucidating the path of Bhakti, once again brings our attention back to who we are, what we comprise of, and why we get mesmerized into believing we are this BMI [body, mind intellect]. In discourse XII from shloka 13 to the end Shri Krishna talks of the sanyasins who possess the knowledge of Truth and the sort of life they lead. Possessing that knowledge they become ever so dear to Him. Every shloka ends with sachame priyah- such a one is dear to Me. These qualities need to be practised by the unenlightened.

In the seventh discourse Shri Krishna had talked about the two Prakrutis- The lower [aparaa]one composed of the five elements and mind, intellect and ego and the higher one [paraa] – the knower of the lower Prakruti, in fact none other than Ishvara- the Lord Himself. The Lord therefore becomes the cause of the origin, the sustenance and dissolution of the Universe. Now this discourse on Kshetra and Kshetrajnya is an elaboration of these two Prakrutis, so that the essential nature of Ishvara is determined. The Prakruti composed of the three Gunas transforms itself into all objective forms such as the bodies [karyas-effect], senses [karanas -instruments] and sense objects [vishaya], and is combined into the various aggregates of the body and senses, to subserve the two ends of Purusha- *enjoyment and liberation*. {Shankara}. Such an aggregate is this our body and in reference to it this discourse unfolds.

We will learn in detail what this Aparaa Prakruti is and the Paraa will reveal itself! Each discourse is a specific note in this the divine song, the Bhagvad Gita – Shri Krishna is all, the composer, the singer, the song! Just as He is the Purusha, Prakruti and the Jiva! O how exquisite is this mysterious manifestation.

Shloka 0

अर्जुन उवाच ।

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव क्षेत्रं क्षेत्रज्ञमेव च ।

एतद्वेदितुमिच्छामि ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं च केशव ॥ ० ॥

[this verse does not appear in the Bhagvad Gita]

Arjuna said, "O Keshav, I wish to understand what are Prakṛiti and Puruṣh, and what are kṣhetra and kṣhetrajña? I also wish to know what is true knowledge, and what is the goal of this knowledge?"

Included here as it has been composed by some scholar later and outlines the questions answered in this discourse.

What is Prakruti and what is Purusha?

What is Kshetra and Kshetrajnya?

What is Jnyanam [knowledge] and Jnyeyam [that which is to be known]?

These are very sophisticated and subtle questions, and these arise only after a certain level of understanding, almost encompassing the entire teachings of Vedanta. This verse is reasonable in that it introduces the subject. Vedanta leads you along a carefully defined path of discovery, this methodology is called Prakriya- there are three aspects to it- Shruti [scriptures], Yukti[reasoning] and Anubhava[experience]. Thus, a path is created through the scriptural revelations like Tat Tvam Asi, reasoning, not blind faith, and then experience, confirmed by reasoning and scriptural teachings. This methodology is not meant to give only information, but experiential knowledge. It is brilliant, because it relies on just three sidhantas [principles- viz. shruti, yukti and anubhava] which have no contradictions between them.

The disciple here is asking for atma[Self] / anatma[Not Self], viveka to be explained in a manner such that it becomes experiential.

Shloka 1

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

इदं शरीरं कौन्तेय क्षेत्रमित्यभिधीयते ।

एतद्यो वेत्ति तं प्राहुः क्षेत्रज्ञ इति तद्विदः ॥ १ ॥

Sri Bhagwan said: This body, Arjuna, is termed as the Field (Kshetra), and he who knows it, is called the Knower of the Field (Kshetrajnya) by the sages discerning the truth about both.

Shloka 2

**क्षेत्रज्ञं चापि मां विद्धि सर्वक्षेत्रेषु भारत ।
क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोर्ज्ञानं यत्तज्ज्ञानं मतं मम ॥ 2 ॥**

Know Myself to be the Kshetrajnya (individual soul) in all the kshetras (fields) Arjuna. And it is the knowledge of the Field (Kshetra) and the knower of the field (Kshetrajnya) (ie., of Matter with its evolutes and the Spirit) which I consider as true knowledge.

Shri Krishna is now explaining to Arjuna in depth, what is considered the field and the knower of the field. The body is the field, and it should be nurtured, as within dwells the Knower or the Atman. The individual soul is the Knower and Shri Krishna- the Absolute is the Paramatman the soul of the Universe. Prakruti is the field and Purusha the knower of the field. Creation came into being with the meeting of Purusha and Prakruti [according to Sankhya philosophy which postulates two primordial forces]- and when the Purusha awakens to the truth he becomes the Purushottam. Shri Krishna is the knower in the entire universe, for like the thread in the garland, he is the upholder of all- Swami Rama.

Eknath has likened the field to a farm and explains how the Farmer must know the right seed, time and season to plant and then nourish the sprouts with water, for the right harvest. The body and mind are the farm, not realising this, we sow seeds of anger, resentment and despair off and on, into the field of the mind, not only that we nourish these seeds, with the manure of similar thoughts and suggestions. What we do not realise is that the body is intimately connected to the mind and over years of such planting, the harvest one reaps is ill health like hypertension, arthritis, lowered immunity and even cancer. The tree looks as different from the seed as chalk from cheese and one would never suspect that his / her disease was the result of wrong thinking. Ironically when ill health strikes, such a person is bound to get more resentful and blames fate, thus further seeds of the same kind are sown- and this is Karma. The good news is, once known the weeds can be removed and the seeds of patience, tolerance and the like sown, for a rich harvest of peace would then follow. The modern man runs after sensual pleasures, appeasing one after another sense

stimulation, in the hope of mental tranquillity, little realising that the seed sown is one of desire, and the fruit can only be more desire!

He carries the analogy further and says suppose the Gardner fell asleep in his garden, the plants overgrew and he somehow, became smaller. When he looks around, he finds the plants communicating with themselves having formed a network all their own. When he questions them (thoughts, desires) he is told to lay off or he might die. But of course, the gardener slowly stands up, and asks - how long do you think you can survive? And the plants concede that they die, when the conditions are unfavourable, but no matter as soon as conditions are favourable, they sprout again (such is rebirth). Once, the Gardener takes charge the face of the garden changes, it is no longer a chaotic group of strange weeds with an occasional blossom, but a well-tended beautifully laid garden, while all the time the Gardener knows the garden will perish, *but he will not*.

The word Kshetra also denotes a temple in many Indian languages and verily this body is the temple of God, we should take good care of it- not overeat, exercise, and have a regular schedule, with rest and meditation included. The temple must be kept clean and in good repair, take out all that can dirty it- particularly the ego. In the modern world with the advance of the lower faculties- the physical aspects can be taken care of but if there is no spiritual knowledge to go with it- this will spell disaster for the world, for the Ego will be in the drivers' seat. We can make heaven on earth if we bring spiritual values to bear and stop the ego.

This chapter to my mind, although not one of the celebrated chapters of the Bhagvad Gita, simply appeals to me the most. Sometimes, I feel we should explain this to young children and youth for then the results would be astounding. We are so completely identified with the body and mind that we are oblivious of the inner dweller. Even if this is hard to realise at least the concept should be understood so that we live consciously. By this I mean let us inculcate the habit in ourselves, and the young, to view the mind and body as a field, where we sow seeds of negative and positive emotions and then let us practically demonstrate, how the garden or farm needs to be looked after and what to expect from the harvest. Goenkaji during the course in Vipassana would lovingly ask- 'agar vyakulta ka beej boge to vyakulta hi milegee na?' ['if

you sow the seed of anguish, you will reap the fruit of anguish, is it not?'] So, one needs to be forewarned of the consequences. Of course, we are all told think good, speak good, do good- but we are not quite clear why? Yet again, we are also told the consequences, and therefore, we do not sow all the wrong seeds, but this would help enormously if we could demonstrate the effect practically in a garden, overgrown with weeds and occasional flower sprouting while another well-tended with blossoms of every hue. Today medicine has amply demonstrated the mind body connection, and it is common knowledge that mental states reflect, in the formation of disease in the body. When I worked in the cancer ward in a London Hospital, I was one of the few doctors who took a personal history carefully- to my dismay as a young house surgeon I discovered 99% of the patients had suffered a severe emotional trauma, prior to the onset of the cancer - be it a relationship break up, loss of child, some guilt or financial disaster. If only they knew how to face these situations with equanimity they would not suffer.

The awareness which lends its light to the body mind complex is completely obscured by this darkness of ignorance, of wrong identification. We identify with the house and forget the light that illumines it. Once this ignorance grabs us, we do everything to preserve the house and no wonder, we become selfish, all through life craving or avoiding, little realising we are sowing seeds of desire and misery which sprout as certainly as the sun shines or the water wets. It's high time we saw through this illusion and gave just the right value, to that which is fleeting, while poised in the eternal.

Nikhilananda: Kshetra - this body, the word idam- means 'this'- that which is experienced as separate from self. Ksharir- that which constantly dies. Field because we sow seeds in it and we get fruits also, in this. Various actions are performed and they grow, and the fruit is also reaped in it. Kshetra also decays- (kshaya- that which gets destroyed), new thoughts, emotions are born, grow and decay.

The one who is conscious of this body- is the knower- Ksetrajnya. There is a Consciousness, which is conscious of this material phenomenal body, for the body is made of the five elements only. There is only something strange about this body- it has consciousness - this is the Ksetrajnya. The 'I am' does not require any proof- it is swayam pramanam.

Sarva kshetreshu- in every different body, there is a kshetrajnya, from viruses to human- and there are bodies within bodies e.g. bacteria etc. The adult human body is composed of approximately 30 to 37.2 trillion cells. While estimates vary based on body size and weight, 37 trillion is a commonly cited figure for an average 70 kg man. **Microbial Cells:** In addition to human cells, the body contains an estimated 10 to 100 trillion bacteria in the gut microbiome. Thus, the estimate is that nearly 50% of the human body is made up of microbial cells! **What is it we call ME, ME, ME?**

We exist in the body of the totality; in every body - that 'I am' alone is there, that means the Kshetrajnya is only **One** e.g. the sun shining in all drops. Reflection of the sun cannot be there without the drop. Light cannot be seen by itself, unless it is reflected off, some object. Similarly, Pure consciousness is free from all sense of objectivity. However, the Kshetrajnya is conscious of the body. Basic experience of 'I am' is the same in all. The reflection forgets, its origin as being the sun, when it realises its oneness with the sun, it knows it is in ALL. If we study from the standpoint of Arjuna- we will remain the small identity, but if we shift our standpoint to Shri Krishna- we will know the Truth.

Shankara: You should also know the Kshetrajnya described above, to be Myself, to be the Supreme Lord, not a being of the world. The meaning is – the Kshetrajnya who is in all Kshetras, and who is differentiated by the manifold upadhis [bodies- kshetras] from Brahma down to a clump of grass, is you should understand, really devoid of all various upadhis[conditions] and is inaccessible to any such word or thought as sat or asat- existence or non-existence. As nothing else remains to be known apart from the true nature of Kshetra/Kshetrajnya and Ishvara, that knowledge by which two objects of knowledge – Kshetra and Kshetrajnya are known is considered by Me, the Lord Vishnu, to be right knowledge.

The soul is subject to evil only through ignorance.

Objection {anupatti}: If there be only the one Being, namely Ishvara in all Kshetra, if there be no other enjoyer, distinct from Him it would follow, that either Ishvara, is a sansarin or that there is no samsara, because there is no sansarin none other than Ishvara. Neither conclusion is acceptable for then it would follow, that the scriptures which treat bondage / liberation and their respective causes, would have no purpose to serve. Moreover, the conclusion is opposed to all evidence, including sensuous perception [pratyaksha]. In the

first-place pleasure and pain and their causes, which together constitute samsara are known to us by immediate perception. And from our perception of variety in the world, the existence of samsara, arising from dharma and adharmā may also be inferred. All this would be inexplicable in the Atman and Ishvara, if the Self and the Lord be identical.

Answer: No; for that can be explained as due to a distinction between jñāna and ajñāna, between knowledge and ignorance. A long and exhaustive discussion follows on why the Kshetrajñya cannot be tainted. To summarise it, the Kshetrajñya cannot be tainted because of the following:

-The cogniser cannot be the cognised.

-If the cause of misery is ignorance and it can be cognised this cannot be in a third cogniser for then we would land into the ad infinitum [anaavastha] explanation which is not tenable. The Avidya [ignorance] therefore lies in the cognised – which is Maya or Prakriti.

-There cannot be two cognisers – i.e. Ishvara and the Self for that would lead to conflict one would then have to postulate a third entity from which these two arise. This is not the case.

-The Lord has shown that the Self in Himself has no concern with action or with its accessories or with its results, that they are **imputed** to the Self by Avidya, and that they are therefore, said to belong to the Self only as a matter of a 'figure of speech,' as the act of heating is attributed to fire simply by its virtue of being hot.

-Those that are Self realised have ascertained the purity of the Kshetrajñya as being present in all but not tainted by any. The mala – dirt of ignorance which abided in Avidya [Ignorance] drops.

Shloka 2 ctd: When one looks into the mirror one sees the Kshetrum[singular for Kshetra] not the Kshetrajñya. The Kshetrajñya is divine- it is there before the body, will be there after death and it is what you are! These are some of the most profound teachings of Vedānta. This knowledge of the Kshetra and Kshetrajñya is real knowledge, is My opinion, all else is information. This knowledge is special because it can put an end to all suffering and bring liberation. Knowledge frees you from suffering if you discover, that the one who suffers is not you- not conceptually but to actually, recognize that the body and mind is a thing known to you. If the body is broken- the body is broken- I am

ok! That divinity which is Consciousness does not break or suffer. When this becomes an experiential knowledge, it sets you free.

Shri Krishna then goes on to elaborate the Kshetra in the next three to four shlokas. The structure of Creation is given according to Sankhya yoga much like learning Anatomy right at the start of Medicine. This knowledge is unlike higher Maths like Calculus etc. which seems irrelevant for daily life, whereas this Knowledge is of utmost relevance as it removes ignorance which leads to freedom from suffering. Tadatmanand – ‘Knowledge frees you from suffering if you discover that which suffers is not you.’ Even though it seems difficult and obstruse it is essential to understand in depth the principal differences in the one I truly am, and what everything else [world] is. The details are as follows:

Shloka 3

तत्क्षेत्रं यच्च यादृक्च यद्विकारि यतश्च यत् ।

स च यो यत्प्रभावश्च तत्समासेन मे शृणु ॥ ३ ॥

What that Field [Kshetra] is and what is its nature, what are its modifications, and from what causes what effects have arisen, and also who its knower [Kshetrajnya] is, and what is His glory – hear all this from Me in brief.

Shloka 4

ऋषिभिर्बहुधा गीतं छन्दोभिर्विविधैः पृथक् ।

ब्रह्मसूत्रपदैश्चैव हेतुमदभिर्विनिश्चितैः ॥ ४ ॥

The truth about the Kshetra and the Ksetrajnya has been expounded by the seers in manifold ways; again, it has been separately stated in different Vedic chants and also in the conclusive and reasoned texts of the Brahmasutras.

Shloka 5

महाभूतान्यङ्ककारो बुद्धिरव्यक्त मेव च ।

इन्द्रियाणि दशैकं च पञ्च चेन्द्रियगोचराः ॥ ५ ॥

The five elements, the intellect, the unmanifest (Primordial Matter- the hidden vikaras- vasanas and sanskaras) the ten organs of perception and action, the mind and the five objects of senses (sound, touch, colour, taste and smell).

Eknath: Shri Krishna is hinting at the principles of creation here and although technical some knowledge of theory, is essential as we progress on the path. Shri Krishna is expounding the Sankhya (sankhya-numbers) philosophy which is always accompanied with yoga as the means of understanding. This philosophy enumerates twenty- four cosmic principles. Eknath goes on to explain how all of them are within us. He cites the scientific explanation of the beginning of the Universe - Big Bang theory from a point which is dimensionless- this according to Sankhya is called Mahat- which is prior to any appearance of forms. Then the Gunas appear through the power of Prakruti and manifestation is the result of an imbalance in these Gunas. According to the Big Bang theory also the explosion- (sound) happens due to an imbalance in the state of this dimensionless point. Light appears later. Eknath goes on to explain how Aham, (the Buddhi and Manas) is the first modification of form and how with sadhana we have to overcome it to reach the balanced state.

It is very interesting to learn the similarities in scientific experiments and the revelation of the Sages. At the cost of oversimplification I would like to say that Sankhya is one of the philosophies in our spiritual heritage which explains the origin of the Universe. It postulates 24 Principles two eternal i.e. the Purusha - Consciousness and Prakruti - Nature. Of these two Purusha is immutable and Prakruti is constantly mutating- through her powers - the three Gunas, at the same time she also remains the unmanifest Prakruti. The Primordial Unmanifest Prakruti is the Cosmic record of vasanas and sanskaras which become manifest in this Manifest Universe. It seems to be like a Bank with individual accounts, related to the microcosmic beings and the Macrocosm as a whole. These vasanas are the cause of creation, sustenance and their ultimate destruction as well- Swami Chinmayananda. The Gunas give rise to Ahamkar, Manas, Buddhi the five senses and the five objects of the senses as well as the five essences of the senses - these are the 24 principles of creation according to San

khya. Kapila Muni 500 years before Buddha is the originator of this theory.

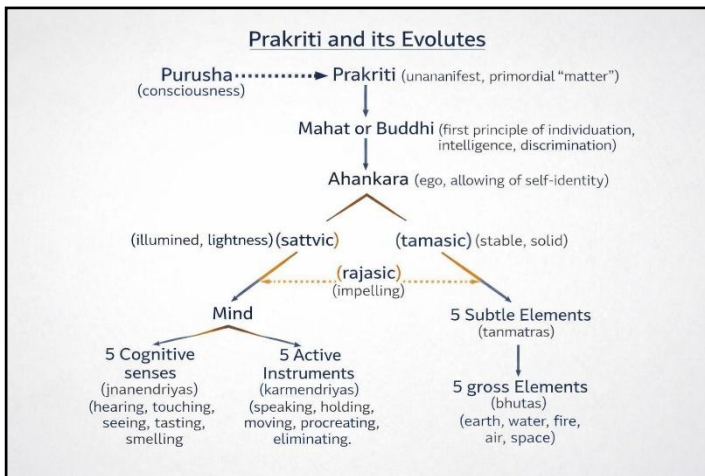
Our sages say it began as a Bindu and first there was Naada and then all these principles evolved. In meditation when one reaches the formless state it is called Bindu Bheda- broken through the barrier of the dimensionless point.

Only when we go beyond Naama and Rupa can we be said to be in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. The Bindu is the beginning of Naama / Rupa as given in the Guru Gita.

Shankara: Defines Pancha Mahabhutas- as such because they pervade all vikaras -all modifications of matter.

Egoism – Ahankara- self-consciousness-cause of the five elements. Reason-Buddhi is defined as determination and is the cause of Ahankara. The cause of Avyakta the unmanifested. Avikaryata- the Undifferentiated – the energy of the Lord (Ishvara – Shakti) spoken of in Discourse 7 Shloka 14- so much alone is Prakruti divided eight-fold. This Mula Prakruti is spoken of as Maya in the shloka. Then ten senses made up of the five Jnanendriyas – senses of knowledge such as hearing for they produce knowledge and the five Karmendriyas such as speech and hand so called because they bring about action, Then the manas which is composed of thoughts and the purposes [sankalpa] and so on is the eleventh sense. The five objects of the senses eg sound are the 24 tattvas [principles] spoken in Sankhya.

The diagram given with explanation of Sankhya is repeated here for convenience. The Kshetra:



Shloka 6

इच्छा द्वेषः सुखं दुः सङ्घातश्चेतना धृतिः ।

एतत्क्षेत्रं समासेन सविकारमुदाहृतम् ॥ 6॥

Also desire, aversion, pleasure, pain, the physical body, consciousness, firmness; thus is the Kshetra, with its evolutes briefly stated.

Swami Rama: (takes shlokas 5/6 together) and explains that Shri Krishna has listed the 31 fold Prakruti in the above shlokas- five elements-(earth, water, fire, wind and space), ten sense organs - (five cognitive+ five active), the ego, mind, intellect, unmanifest Prakruti plus the five objects of the senses (sound, light, fragrance, touch, taste) along with these he adds desire, hatred, pleasure and pain, the organism, sentience and sustenance. They are the components, from which this Universe is manifested. The modifications of these, bring a myriad forms into existence.

Shri Krishna has hit on a terminology suited to modern times- ‘field’. The body is part of the field and all that goes with it which is the world within - mind. At the cellular level the body is mainly space, and it keeps on changing so basically it is a “process” nothing very solid at all. So also, with the mind which is in a constant state of flux- with nothing solid about it- desires, impressions, and likes and dislikes keep changing. **However, the only thing about the mind which seems permanent are really the sanskaras- or tendencies and conditionings we have held for not only this lifetime but many before. These too can be changed, thus this is what forms the field. Swami Rama.**

Shri Krishna is further describing the field and includes the pairs of opposites, desire and the ‘I’ thought in the field. So that to the observer the object gets slowly revealed like lifting a veil inch by inch, all the time allowing the viewer to imagine what might be coming. In doing so one may become the subject thus understanding the subject as it is- not the theory alone. In medicine, this method, is called the method of exclusion for diagnosis- saying that it is not this, not this, not this so it must be that!

Shankara: The Vaisheshika school of philosophy attributes the above to the Atman. Here the Lord clarifies that desire, the pairs of opposites, the aggregate of senses- body, the intelligence [here translated as consciousness], are all

within the purview of Kshetra for they are knowable. The Lord here concludes the present subject as follows: the Kshetra has been thus briefly described, with its modifications such as Mahat [Buddhi] etc.

The following verses take up the second pair of questions of Arjuna- what is Jnanam [knowledge and Jnanam [means to knowledge]?

The means to knowledge are called Pramanas, here three are used:

1. Pratyaksha -direct 2. Anumana -inference and 3. Shastras. These are the means to knowledge, who then are worthy to receive this knowledge? They are also three- 1. Uttama Adhikari – best 2. Madhyama Adhikari medium and 3. the Adha Adhikari – lowest. We are now being taught the values of the Uttam Adhikari as follows.

Shlokas 7 to 11 gives 20 sadhanas which when cultivated we can see the Truth, **just like a dirty mirror does not make my face dirty, but to see my face I need to clean the mirror.** Only then can I recognize myself as the Kshetrajnya. They form a set of twenty virtues which we need to cultivate, and literally, are prerequisites for following the path of Jnana. Naturally, if such high esoteric wisdom is to be imbibed, we need to train our mind, we need to sharpen our faculties so as to grasp the subtleties of this, the highest Knowledge. It is seen that meditation per se, will not remove emotional impurities, for that Karmayoga and counselling at the emotional level is required. The treatment has to be according to the disease.

Shloka 7

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।

आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥ ७ ॥

Absence of pride, freedom from hypocrisy, non-violence, forbearance, uprightness of speech and mind etc., devout service of the preceptor. Internal and external purity, steadfastness of mind and control of body, mind and the senses.

Shloka 8

इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहङ्कार एव च ।

जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥ ८ ॥

Dispassion towards the on objects of enjoyment of this world and the next, and also absence of egotism, pondering again and again on the pains and evils inherent in birth and death, old age and disease.

Shloka 9

**असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।
नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥ 9 ॥**

Absence of attachment and sense of mineness in respect of son, wife, home etc., and constant equipoise of mind both in favourable and unfavourable circumstances.

Shloka 10

**मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।
विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥ 10 ॥**

Unflinching devotion to Me through exclusive attachment, living in secluded and holy places, and finding no delight in worldly people;

Shloka 11

**अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ।
एतज्ज्ञानमिति प्रोक्तमज्ञानं यदतोऽन्यथा ॥ 11 ॥**

Constancy in Self- knowledge and seeing God as the object of true knowledge- all this is declared knowledge and contrary to this is ignorance.

Virtues conducive to Self- Knowledge. This is what it takes to attain Knowledge:
{taken from the net – Bhagvad Gita- Vedanta Students}

- 1) **Amanitvam** (Humility): *Absence of self-praise, self-glory, making one's virtues known to others and one demands respect from others. Nourishes Dehatma Abhimana. I demand recognition because of low self-image. I must respect myself; I am Atma- Sat-Chit- Ananda and everything else is inferior. The potential given to my Kshetra part by Lord – Iccha, Jnana, Kriya shakti in a limited form. Once I respect my body, senses and mind I do not demand respect- all glories belong to Ishvara. Each one has his or her own Kshetra to express, the form is different and perfect.*
- 2) **Adambhitva**: (Modesty) *Absence of pretentiousness, ostentatiousness. Dambha is once again declaring one's own glories,*

greatness, that one does not have. Ahankara pradhaan- publishing one's own achievements, Mamakara pradhaan – charities done.

- 3) **Ahimsa**: Not hurting by our intentions and feelings. Mind must be sensitive to understand others pains. Helps one to see the fullness with respect to others and sympathise. No double standards, such as nobody should hurt me, I can hurt others.
- 4) **Kshanti**: Forgiveness- capacity to suffer long without being upset, remaining unchanged when one is wronged by another, control Vikriya which is the impulse to react.
- 5) **Arjavam**: Uprightness, straight forwardness, transparency. Harmonise align thought, word, and deed and who is intent on right conduct. Then there is freedom from conflict within myself which is called Vakratva-crookedness. One aspect of Arjava is satya- truth.
- 6) **Acharya upasana** : Service to teacher, means to build shraddha, not merely physical but mental and intellectual identity with teacher's pure heart and intellect. Acharya means svayam charati and anyah Acharyati – one who himself understands and makes others understand and follow. Words should come from a person who walks, what he talks. **Then alone do they convey the meaning with such clarity that both the person and words disappear; the meaning alone remains.** When listening, Ahankara is under check. Body, sense organs, mind don't feel "I am Atma". Shabda {scriptures} Pramana operates to negate reality of Ahankara. If Ahankara is operating, we understand only what we already know. Vedanta reveals a Vastu not subject to negation. It talks about limitless, Consciousness which can't be improved upon. To keep Ahankara suspended, you need Shraddha. The whole teaching is meant to falsify the Ahankara through the discovery of its own true nature – Svarupa. Distance between me and moksha is Asraddha.
- 7) **Saucha** : Inner and outer purity. Malam [dirt] is Raga, Dvesha. Mind is also used constantly, and should be subject to Sauca like external clothes. What you don't like to have: Anger, greed, selfishness, hatefulness, jealousy, dishonesty, miserliness, need to be washed away. Inner Sauca obtained by prayer and Pratipaksa Bhavana (Bring opposite emotion, Initiate the opposite to remove habit). Antahkaranam is instrument for Shravanam, Mananam,

Ninidhyasanam. Must be kept clean from impurities. External Sauca : External environment can be controlled and must be in order to bring order in the mind. In Garage – can't meditate. Temple inspires. Place inspires. Must feel like doing something, one becomes reflective in clean surroundings.

- 8) **Sthairya** – Steadfastness – Commitment: (Drithi – perseverance – will power) (i) Commitment to pursuit of Moksha. To discern human problem and determination, that is what he needs. Sanyasa is only this determination. (ii) Commitment to one's own duties. Karma Yoga → Proper action – Commitment to Dharma. → Our attitude to Karma Phala – Ishvara Prasada. Karma is to neutralise Raga Dvesa, steadiness makes my life into Yoga. Now and then ask, "Where Am I going."
- 9) **Atma Nigraha**: Mastery over Body – Mind Complex. Restraining Body – Mind complex with filtered Raga – Dvesha in all activity. Self-control, mastery.
- 10) **Indriyarthesu Vairagyam**; Dispassion towards sense objects, objective attitude, not with likes + dislikes. Viraga – Mind from which longing for object is gone. Vairagya – State of mind.
- 11) **Anahankara** : Absence of self-importance, pride, at thought level. (Amanitvam – Expressing pride at verbal level). Ahankara is sense of I, me, mine. Presenting oneself in the reflection of glory is pride. Born out of ignorance of the fact that everything you have is given to you to develop the potential to know your intrinsic nature. **Lack of thinking alone makes a person proud**. All glory belongs to Bhagawan. Body/mind glorification is demoniacal]Sampati[wealth].
- 12) **Janma – Mrityu – Jara**: Seeing limitations of life. In all these there is Dukham. Seeing these, seeker is conscious of the pain, in his present stage of existence and gets the urge to possess the Divine field of perfection. When attachment, see dosha (old age). When aversion, see Guna Anudarshanam (body as temple).
- 13) **Asakti** : Absence of ownership means nonattachment. Body, Mind, Senses are possessions for one who is independent of the Body. One cannot totally avoid a sense of ownership. We have only temporary possession of anything, not ownership in the relative world. I am only a managing trustee of Body, Mind, Intellect – which has been given to me. Minds sticking to various objects of the world with extreme liking

for them, is called attachment. Mental contacts with the world outside provide the breeding centre for all sorrows in life.

14) Anabhisvangah Putra – Dara – Grihadisu : Obsession towards Son, Wife, House and so on... Abhisvangaha – is excessive attachment, emotional dependence, [here is an-abhisvangaha.] Love, care and affection are fine. Mine should not be identified as 'Me'.

15) Nityam – Samacittatvam : Constant equanimity. Sameness of mind in the gain of desirable and undesirable. Minds response to Karma Phala is equanimous. Chitta – mind is cheerful or sorrowful. Reacting mind is not available for learning. Minds composure required in all situations by Prasada Buddhi. How to channel newly discovered energy?

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय।

सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते॥ २.४८॥

Perform action O Dhananjaya, abandoning attachment, being steadfast in yoga, and balanced in success and failure. "Evenness of mind is called Yoga".

[Chapter 2 – Verse 48]

16) Mayi Ananya – Yogena Bhakti Avyabharini: Unswerving devotion to me. Unflinching devotion to Ishvara who is the cause of everything and who resolves everything back unto him. Lord is the refuge and end of my pursuit. Yoga of non-otherness is Ananya Bhakti.

17) Vivikta –Desa sevita: Preference for a secluded place. One who has a tendency to a quiet place and his state of mind is called Vivikta desasevita. It is a disposition to enjoy a contemplative life.

18) Aratih Janasamsadi:- Absence of craving for social interaction. Avoiding company of people who are disturbance to your pursuit and who can confuse you. These attitudes and values make Antah karana mature and knowledge possible. What are the real means for Moksha?

19) Adhyatma Jnana – Nityatva : Knowledge centred on self – Atma Visaya Jnana. Knowledge that atma is Brahman. Constantly engaged in knowledge with total commitment. Tat Chintanam, tat Kathanam, anyonyam tat prabodham. Exposes to teaching, analyses understanding, shares with others. Tattva Jnanam is means of maturity. Knowledge is to be lived and not merely learnt. Seeker should live as Self in all levels of personality, as Self alone is real and

everywhere. What is Adhyatma Jnanam? Brahma Satyam Jagan Mitya Jeevo Brahmeiva Na Paraha. Jiva and Brahma are one. The 3 obstacles don't help me claim, I am Chaitanyam principle behind Jiva, Jagat, Ishvara are Pramana asambhava- not clear about the concept, Prameya asambhava- Logical doubt, and Viparita Bhavana- strong identification with body/mind due to habit. Growing clarity comes because of 20 virtues.

20) Tattva – Jnana artha Darsanam : Commitment to Self-knowledge. Result of Self-knowledge is infinite freedom. All values culminate in Self-knowledge, and one gains Moksha, which is in the form of cessation of Samsara. Seeing this fact again and again is called Darsana. Most important Sadhana where there is constant dwelling on the value of pursuit.

All these values are means of Jnanam.

Shloka 12

जेयं यत्तत्प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वामृतमश्नुते ।

अनादिमत्परं ब्रह्म न सत्तन्नासदुच्यते ॥ 12॥

I shall speak to you at length about that which ought to be known and knowing which one attains supreme Bliss. That supreme Brahma, who is the lord of the two beginning less entities- Prakriti and Jiva is said to be neither sat (being) nor sat (non-being).

Like the shloka points out we need to first know what is sat and what is asat. By that is meant we need to know what is immutable, eternal and what is fleeting and changeable, then one practices, so that he is established in the knowledge of the Immutable Truth - Brahman. As clearly seen, we can either jump out of our skin (ego) and become the Truth or slowly practice the characteristics of the one who has thus attained and experience the Truth.

The whole point of spiritual wisdom is to go beyond death. It is possible. It can be done, and has been done, by cutting the nexus of identification with the body. Eknath explains how in Kathopanishad, Nachiketa asks this very question to Yama the God of Death who instructs him on how death is not the end and

that the life beyond death can be discovered, by stepping out of the egocentric personality and discovering who we truly are.

Shankara: Explains that the Lord first inspires an intense desire in Arjuna to know That which is worth knowing- Jneyam-by describing It- Brahman as the One by knowing which one attains Supreme Bliss. The Lord then goes on to say 'That Brahman, which is Anaadimatparam, Absolute without beginning, leading to immortality (amrutam), beyond speech and thought is said to be neither *sat* (existent) nor *asat* (non-existent).' The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad describes It as *Neti, Neti- not this, not this*.

Being beyond the reach of the senses, it is not an object of consciousness, accompanied with the idea of either *sat* [existence] or *asat* [nonexistence]. That thing indeed which can be perceived by the senses, such as a pot, can be an object in consciousness, accompanied with the idea of *sat* and *asat*. Since on the other hand, the Knowable -Jneyam- is beyond the reach of the senses and as such can be known solely through that instrument of Knowledge - Jnanam- which is called 'shabda'[the word, i.e. revelation]it cannot be like the pot, and object of consciousness accompanied with the ideas of either *sat* or *asat* and is therefore not said to be *sat* or *asat*.

Now regards the allegation that it is a self-contradiction in terms to say that the Knowable – Jneyam - is not said to be *sat* or *asat*, there is really no contradiction for the Shruti says:

"it is other than the known and above the unknown" (Kena Up. 2-3)

It stands to reason to say that Brahman cannot be expressed in words, such as 'sat' for every word -name [rudhi]employed to denote a thing, denotes that thing when heard by another as associated with a certain genus [jaati], or a certain act [kriya], or a certain quality [guna], or a certain mode of relation [sambandha]. Thus, cats and horse imply genera, cook and teacher imply an act, white and black imply qualities, wealthy and cattle owner imply possession- BUT Brahman belongs to no genus, - it cannot be denoted by such words as 'sat'.

Being devoid of attributes, it possesses no qualities, if it did then it could be denoted by a word with qualities. Being actionless, it cannot be indicated by a word implying an act.

The Shruti says: “It is without parts, actionless and tranquil”. (Shvetopanishad 6-19).

It is not related [sambandha] to anything else for It is one, without a second, it is no object [of any sense] – It is the very Self. Wherefore it is but right to say that it cannot be denoted by word at all: and the passages of the Shruti like the following, point to the same thing.

“Whence (i.e. away from Brahman unable to approach Brahman) all words return.” (Tait. Up 2-4-1)

Brahman is the source of all activity. When it is said that Brahman the Knowable is not accessible, to the word or thought of ‘sat’, one may perhaps suppose It to be ‘asat’. To prevent this supposition the Lord proceeds to declare Its existence as manifested, through the ‘upadhis’ through the senses of all living Beings.

Since nothing is found which is devoid of all conditions [upadhis] and quite beyond all speech and thought, nay, since everything we experience is of a contrary nature, one may suppose that Brahman as described above must be a void or nonentity (sunya). To prevent this supposition, the Lord proceeds to teach that Brahman exists, as the (i) Inner Self (Pratyak) (ii) as the source of all activity of the senses and the like, (iii) as the source whence arises our consciousness of existence, with reference to all duality which is imaginary, (iv) as Ishvara, or the Lord of the Universe.

First of all, here, the Lord proves, by way of inference the existence of Brahman as the Inner Self- Consciousness; there must be some Self-conscious principle (Pratyak- chetana) behind insentient principle in activity, such as the physical body for we invariably find Self-consciousness, lying behind even insentient objects in activity, such as a carriage in motion man]. It is not only Existence but also Consciousness- by this is meant it is self-evident, not dependent on anything else to be cognised. Thus it is Sat, Chit and It is also, Anandam [loosely translated Bliss] for It has no lack!

What is Ajnanam? Ajnanam yad ato nyatha - Values and attitudes opposed to these are called Ajnanam. Opposites: Manitva Dambhitva, Himsa (Hurting),

Aksanti, Anarjava (No integrity), Asthairyam (Pursuits of likes & dislikes). Desire to know Atma rises only in a mind without such negative values.

Shloka 13

सर्वतः पाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।

सर्वतः श्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति ॥ 13 ॥

It has hands and feet on all sides, eyes, head and mouth in all directions, and ears all round, for it stands pervading all in the universe

To attain immortality, one needs to look within the tomb of the human body. That which is without beginning or end, shining, unattached resides within, in all its glory. Glory pervading all, power both within and without. It is very near and yet very far, undivided appearing as divided.

It is the Leela of the divine, Shri Krishna explains that all of life, is striving to evolve towards the Source of its very existence and in all of life is seen, the same Brahman shining. The deepest desire in every heart is to reach the source of happiness. Grace can propel one towards the Ultimate, speedily and one should make every effort to be worthy of the same.

This shloka is one of the Saptashloki Gita, which we recite every morning and is a reference of the Vishwarupa Darshan that Arjuna receives in Chapter 11. It is metaphorically describing the omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience of the Lord. The universe is the body of the Lord.

Shankara: Explains in detail thus: The Knowable – Jneyam- has hands and feet everywhere. The existence of the Kshetrajnya is indicated by the upadhis, of the sense organs of all living beings. Kshetrajnya (Self-conscious principle lying behind the sense -organs) is so called, because of the upadhi of Kshetra and this Kshetra, is of various forms, such as hands, feet etc. All the variety caused in Kshetrajnya by the variety of the upadhis of Kshetra, is but illusory and it has therefore been said in words ‘sat’[existence] / ‘asat’[non-existence].

The upadhis are mentioned although illusory, so as to indicate the existence of the Knowable – Jneyam- Accordingly, there is the saying of the sampradaya-vids (those who know the method of teaching) which runs as follows; “That

which is devoid of all duality is described by ‘*adhyaropa*’ and ‘*apavada*’ i.e. by *superimposition and negation, by attributes and denial*. Hands and feet and the like constituting the limbs of all bodies, in all places, derive their activity from the Energy, inherent in the Knowable and as such they are mere marks of Its existence, being are spoken of as belonging to it only, by a figure of speech. All the rest should be similarly interpreted. Brahman exists in the world, in the whole animal creation, pervading all. *Brahman is unconditioned*.

The purpose of this verse is to prevent the supposition that the Knowable is really possessed of upadhis- the sense organs such as hands feet and the like, which are merely superimposed upon It.

Shloka 14

सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् ।

असक्तं सर्वभृच्चैव निर्गुणं गुणभोक्तृ च ॥ 14 ॥

Though perceiving all sense objects, It is really devoid of all senses. Nay though unattached It is the sustainer of all nonetheless, and though attributeless, It is the enjoyer of all Gunas, the three modes of Prakriti.

Shankara: Thus, we should understand that Brahman manifests Itself through the Upadhis, of external and internal senses, through the function of all the senses, viz., determination, purposes and thoughts, hearing, speech and the like. That is to say the Knowable- Jneyam - functions ‘as it were,’ through the functions of the senses. The Shruti says: “It meditates ‘as it were,’ it moves ‘as it were.’” (Bri. Upan. 4-3-7).

Why should it not mean it actually functions? Says the Lord, it is not possessed of any of the senses. Wherefore, the Knowable does not actually function when the senses are functioning, and as regards the verse “without hands and feet He is swift, He grasps He sees without the eye he hears without the ear.”- (Svt. Up. 3-19) the Shruti here implies that the Knowable – Jneyam- has the power to accommodate Itself, to the varying functions of all the senses, which are Its upadhis, but not that it actually possesses swift motion, and such other activities. The verse should be interpreted like the passage, ‘The blind saw the gem.’ [Taitt. Aranyaka i. ii] because It is devoid of the senses, therefore It is unattached, devoid of all senses. ‘He sees without the eye, He hears without the ear.’ [Svet. Up. 3-19]

Brahman, the basic Reality in all illusory phenomenon.

Though It is so, yet It supports all. Indeed everything, is based on Sat, the Existent, for everywhere the idea of Sat is present. Not even the mirage and the like exist without a basis. Hence it is said that it supports all.

Brahman, the perceiver of the Gunas.

There is this yet another gate, to a knowledge of the existence of the Knowable. Though devoid of the gunas, sattva, rajas, and tamas- yet the Knowable is the enjoyer, the perceiver, of the gunas which, assuming the forms of sound and other [objects of sense], transform themselves into pleasure, pain, and delusion. Brahman is all.

Shloka 15

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च ।

सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत् ॥ 15 ॥

It exists without and within all beings and constitutes the moving and the unmoving creation as well. And by reason of its subtlety, it is incomprehensible; it is close at hand and stands afar too.

It exists without and within all beings and constitutes the moving and the unmoving creation as well. And by reason of its subtlety, It is incomprehensible; it is close at hand and stands afar too.

Shankara: The body inclusive of the skin which is regarded through ignorance as one's own self. The Inner Self, Pratyag-atman, lying inside the body and all that lies outside the skin is Brahman alone. The statement that It is 'without and within' may imply Its absence in the middle. To prevent this implication, the Lord says that 'It is the unmoving as also the moving.' It is Brahman, the Knowable- Jneyam- that appears as the bodies, moving and unmoving, just as a rope appears as a snake.

Brahman is comprehended only by the wise.

Objection [Anupatti]- If all things we perceive, the moving and the unmoving, were the Knowable- Jneyam- then how is it that Brahman is not directly comprehended by everybody, as This It is?

Ans: Brahman is the Oneself, in All.

True, It manifests Itself as everything but It is subtle, like the Akaasha. Wherefore, on account of Its subtlety, It is incomprehensible to the unenlightened, though knowable in Itself. It is however, always known to the enlightened / as revealed in the following texts: 'All this is the Self and the Self alone.' [Bruha. Upanishad-2-4-6.]

All this is Brahman and Brahman alone.' {Ibid 2-5-1} It is away when unknown for It is unattainable by the unenlightened even in a million years and to the enlightened It is very near, because it is their own Self.

Shloka 16

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।

भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ॥ 16॥

Though integral like space in its undivided aspect, it appears divided as it were in all animate and inanimate beings. And that Godhead, which is the only object worth knowing, is the sustainer (as Vishnu) of beings, the destroyer (as Rudra) and the creator of all (as Brahma).

Paul Brunton in his magnum opus, Wisdom of the Overself, has proven how this world is experienced only in the mind and there is no separate existence. He does this by giving the example of the dream state where one can see mountains, rivers, and skyscrapers, one can feel the depths of sorrow and height of pleasure - with *no external* aid - all arising from mind stuff! The same is true of the waking state - the only reason it seems different is because it seems the rest of humanity is sharing our dream. This is so because it is a divine dream and yet it is not true to say we are sharing this divine dream, for although there is one earth there are 7 billion worlds- each experiences his own reality. Thus, Reality although just the ONE, appears as though divided and this analogy of the dream can make this shloka explicit, in that, all is from the one substrate the mind - the Cosmic Mind. There are not two Realities- it is consciousness alone appearing in form and name, resulting in the experience of duality.

Shloka 17

ज्योतिषामपि तज्ज्योतिस्तमसः परमुच्यते ।

ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञानगम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य विष्ठितम् ॥ 17॥

That supreme Brahma is said to be the light of all lights, and entirely beyond Maaya. That Godhead is knowledge itself, worth knowing and worth attaining through real wisdom, and is particularly abiding in the hearts of all.

The Gita has again and again likened the Self to Light, and It is the source of all light. The Buddha explains that until we realise the Self we are living in darkness. The Buddha has likened the wakeful state, also to sleepwalking and this is so because we are so reactive, quite unconscious of our behaviour, much like in the dream state. To say we are awake, we should be able to direct our attention, at will, whenever we choose. It is as simple as that and yet the most difficult. Most of the time our mind wanders and cannot stay focused or attentive. To be Buddha you have to be awake (the literal meaning) which means, you could turn the faculty of attention, hold it wherever one wants for as long as one needs. The dream state also offers us many emotional and sensual experiences, so what is so different about the waking state? Nothing, all of these experiences are related to the mind consciousness, to which we are addicted and by which we are intoxicated. Havelock Ellis, the psychologist who spent much of his life studying human sexuality, has said “Dreams are real as long, as they last,” he adds “Can we say more of life?” Gita does not say life is unreal, at the physical level however when one knows there is a higher state and strives for it, he comes to the supra sensual state and then the senses are under his total control.

All through Vedanta, in Upanishads, even in common parlance we talk of knowledge as light and ignorance as darkness for e.g. we say ‘it “dawned” on him that he has done wrong.’ So, light is likened to knowledge and ignorance to darkness- to remove darkness we need to light a lamp, but one can never remove light by bringing in darkness. It is heartening to know that once the light is lit, darkness will have no entry! Banish ignorance forever. Ignorance-Avidya is only about what is Anatma (not self), Anitya (fleeting) and what is Asuchi (impure). Anatma is that which is not Self and Anitya is that which is fleeting to which we cling tenaciously, never letting go, and Asuchi - Impure - includes both body and mind. In the Guru Gita Shiva, tells Parvati let not this body which is made of flesh, blood, skin and mucus delude you O! Beautiful faced one! So, Truth once revealed, the lamp of Knowledge is lit. The Guru is

the one who does the ceremony of lighting the lamp! (Gu- darkness, ru-remover)

It is the light of all the lights- e.g. moon shines due to the sun similarly the Absolute is reflected in the consciousness of all. It is beyond darkness and ignorance. Intellect is touched by ignorance, but Pure consciousness cannot be so clouded. Once the 20 values are practiced, we become ready through Jnana to know that which should be Known. If we hold on to 'I am' we can go to the Absolute. The confusion is regarding my nature - not that I do not know I AM - it is felt in the [spiritual] heart if we hold on to it - we can get to the True Nature. Ramana says the same. There is no notion of the body mind there - just sit on the I Am and it will take you to your destination - hridi sarvasya vitishthitam.

Below a summary of Shankaras commentary on verses 18-21 is given in case the reader would like more clarification on Kshetra and Kshetrajnaya.

Shloka 18

इति क्षेत्रं तथा ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं चोक्तं समासतः ।

मदभक्त एतद्विज्ञाय मदभावायोपपद्यते ॥ 18 ॥

Thus, the truth of the Kshetra and knowledge, as well the object of knowing i.e. God, has been briefly discussed. Knowing this in reality, My devotee attains to My being.

Shankara: Thus the Kshetra, described above (verses 5,6) beginning with the great elements and ending with firmness; knowledge comprising the attributes, which have been enumerated, {beginning with humility and ending with keeping the goal in mind (verses 7-11) is jnanam, (knowledge) and the Jneyam (Knowable)} has been set forth in brief, all else is ignorance. Such, indeed, is the whole doctrine, the doctrine of the Vedas and the doctrine of the Gita in brief.

Anupatti- objection- who is to attain this right knowledge?

He who is devoted to Me, who regards Me- Vasudeva, the Supreme Lord, the Omniscient, the Supreme Guru as the Self of everything i.e. he who is possessed [as it were] of the idea that all that he sees or hears or touches is nothing but the Lord, Vasudeva. Thus, devoted to Me and having attained the

right knowledge, described above he is fit to attain to My state i.e. he attains Moksha.

Prakruti and Purusha are eternal.

In the seventh discourse were described two Prakrutis: the superior [Paraa] and the inferior [Aparaa], corresponding to Kshetra and Kshetrajya; and it was said that they are the womb of all creatures [Dis. 7 sh. 6] It may now be asked how can it be said that the two Prakrutis, Kshetra and Kshetrajnya are the womb of all beings? The question is now answered as follows:

Shloka 19

प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव विद्ध्यनादी उभावपि ।

विकारांश्च गुणांश्चैव विद्धि प्रकृतिसम्भवान् ॥ 19 ॥

Prakruti and Purusha know both these as beginningless. And all modifications such as likes and dislikes etc. and all objects constituted of the three gunas as born of Prakruti.

Shankara: Prakruti and Purusha, Matter and Spirit, are two Prakrutis of the Ishvara, the Lord. These two, Prakruti and Purusha have no beginning. As the Lord is the eternal Lord, it is but right that His Prakrutis also, should be eternal. The Lordship of Ishvara consists indeed in His possession of the two Prakrutis by which He causes the origin, preservation and dissolution of the universe. The two Prakrutis are beginningless and therefore they are the cause of samsara.

Prakruti and Purusha are the cause of samsara. All forms are emanations [vikaras] from Buddhi down the physical body, and all qualities [gunas] such as those which manifest themselves as pleasure, pain, delusion and other mental states to be described hereafter, spring from Prakruti composed of the three gunas, that energy of the Ishvara which constitutes the cause of all emanations- Know that they are modifications of Prakruti.

Shloka 20

कार्यकारणकर्तृत्वे हेतुः प्रकृतिरुच्यते ।

पुरुषः सुखदुःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते ॥ 20 ॥

Prakruti is said to be responsible for bringing forth the evolutes and the instruments, while the individual soul is declared to be responsible for the experience of joys and sorrows.

Shankara: (condensed and clarified)

Kaarana is the term used for cause and the term for effect is Karya.

The Karanas are: The ten senses, mana, buddhi, ahankar and all qualities such as pain, pleasure and delusion.

The. Karya is the physical body made of the pancha Mahabhutas and the five sense objects are the effect, this is so because the body and sense objects would obviously be needed to experience the cause- kaarana.

Prakruti generates them all, thus as producing the physical body and the senses Prakruti is the cause of 'samsara'.

Karana means instrument, which is the effect or emanation (vikara) from Kaarana the primal cause— Prakruti. Thus, Prakruti is source of both cause and effect.

And now will be shown how Purusha is the cause of 'samsar'. 'Purusha', 'Jiva', 'Kshetrajnya', 'Bhoktri' are all synonymous terms. Purusha is said to be the cause as perceiving pleasure, pain and other objects of experience. The anupatti or objection being, how can Purusha and Prakruti both be the cause of samsara? The answer lies in the conjunction of **Purusha** with Avidya or nescience). For without the Purusha how can there be experiencing? Definitions:

Kaarana-[cause] is the root, dormant stage of existence in Primordial Prakruti.

Karya[effect] is its expresses action or result.

Karana [instrument/means] refers to the tools or method used to achieve a result.

What then is this samsara?

Samsara is the experience of pleasure and pain and the Purusha is the 'sansarin' as the experiencer, of pleasure and pain.

Avidya [ignorance] and Kama[desire] are the cause of rebirth.

Shloka 21

पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि भुङ्क्ते प्रकृतिजान्गुणान् ।
कारणं गुणसङ्गोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु ॥ 21 ॥

Only the Purusha in association with Prakruti experiences objects of the nature of the three Gunas evolved from Prakruti and it is the attachment with these three Gunas that is responsible for the birth of this soul in good and evil wombs.

Once Kshetra and Kshetrajnya are known knowledge arises. It however, does not mean that we should shun the body- for it is the field where action takes place. It should be well preserved. Both Purusha and Prakruti are ancient and without beginning. The modifications happen in Prakruti, both the cause and effect reside together in the causal form of Prakruti, this should be known. When the individual soul becomes attached to experiencing pleasure, it also experiences pain for in the absence of the one, the other arises - this is the law of Prakruti.

These concepts are really difficult to grasp and are of practical significance only if properly understood. All the play of sensations and emotions and thought are in the field- kshetra which although seemingly, the experiencer, is in fact, inert [jada]and unless energised by consciousness, incapable of any meaning at all. This means that the Prakruti per se provides the playground- the player is the Purusha. The sensation e.g. of sweetness is only a sensation 'i like it' is an interpretation in the mind and then follow attachment and craving. This when seen clearly leads to a neutral experience of the sensation per se without interpretation and the enjoyment does not diminish, it multiplies for one can feel the enjoyment in others for it too.

The whole of manifestation is a dance of Prakruti and Purusha one cannot have either / or if still in manifestation. Kena Upanishad starts with the disciple asking the question- ken ishiti prerati prashitam manah- who is it who inspires the mind to think? The disciple is slowly led to the experience of the experiencer- i.e. Purusha. In the playground of Prakruti, the Player is Purusha. It is however, only the combination, that leads to the experience of sansar. It depends purely on what you identify with, that you will experience joy and suffering or pure unalloyed joy!

Shankara: The Purusha in conjunction with Avidya identifies himself with the body and senses which are emanations of Prakruti, he experiences the qualities

born of Prakruti which manifest themselves as pleasure, pain and delude – ‘I am wise’. Over and above this false identification with the body is his attachment with what he experiences. “As is his desire, so is his will” [Brih. Up 4-4-5].

Accordingly, the Lord says here, ‘The experiencer’s attachment for qualities leads him to birth in good and evil wombs.’ The good wombs are those of the Devas and the evil are those of lower animals, or those of partly good partly bad are humans.

Self-knowledge removes the cause of sansar. The twofold cause Prakruti and Avidya + Purusha can be seen through by Jnana and Vairagya i.e. Knowledge and dispassion or indifference to sense objects - clearly taught in the Gita - shastra. This Knowledge of Kshetra and Kshetrajnya has been imparted in the beginning of this discourse.

Note: Important points in the shlokas 22-24 are:

The Atma is: the Upadrashtri- i.e. the priest who is the witness of the proceedings during a yajnya or the innermost [upa-near] seer- body being the external most, then the senses then the mind and the innermost being the Self. He watches All. He is also the Anumantri- permitter of the proceedings, while himself not participating in the action. Bhratri- supporter -because the body, sense, manas, Buddhi aggregate to serve His purpose. Bhoktri – the enjoyer-because Self who is nitya -chaitanya svarupa whose inherent nature is intelligence just as heat is the inherent nature of fire. He is Maheshwara - Paramatma – it is only the One consciousness, and it is not my or your consciousness, it has no physical boundary. It is in the deha- dehesmin. All states of mind [buddhe pratyayaaha] are clearly perceived because the intelligent Self permeates it.

The Great Lord as one with All and is independent of All. The Paramatman is supreme beyond the vyakta and the avyakta.

Shloka 24. He who knows 1. Purusha in the above manner and directly perceives Him as His own Self, 2. He who knows Prakruti as resolved into nothing [abhava] by Vidya – Knowledge, 3. Who knows the mysteries of the Gunas, is not born again, when born again he may lead – doing his duties or

renouncing. All his actions are burnt- as the fire burnt seeds do not sprout again, so the body cannot be formed again by wisdom burnt affections. This applies to all actions even those done prior to enlightenment- for no more desire is left.

Nothing exists outside the Self.

Shloka 25

अन्ये त्वेवमजानन्तः श्रुत्वान्येभ्य उपासते ।
तेऽपि चातितरन्त्येव मृत्युं श्रुतिपरायणाः ॥ 25 ॥

Other dull-witted persons, however, not knowing thus, worship even as they may have heard from others ie. the knowers of truth; and even those who are thus devoted to what they have heard, are able to cross the ocean of mundane existence in the shape of death.

Shri Krishna is explaining the four paths to Self-realisation.

The first path is the one yogis follow: Raj yoga- which has 8 steps - Yamas- 'don'ts' of life and Niyamas the 'dos' of life then asana which teaches us how to sit still and keep the body healthy. Following this are Pranayama which is the science of breath and Pratyahara withdrawal of the senses from their objects and turning within. This then makes the next step of Dharana- one pointed attention, easier. Once Dharana is achieved Dhyana- Meditation happens and when Meditation is constant Samadhi is the state which leads to Self-realisation.

The second path is that of Jnana- Knowledge wherein the student studies the Vedas and scriptures as also learns to discriminate between the mere self and the real Self he is liberated. Practices shravana [listening from a Brahma nishtha Guru], manana[reflection] and Nidhidhyasana [contemplation].

The third path is followed by men of action. Who do selfless action, dedicating all the fruits of their actions and understanding Prakruti.

The fourth path is of those who blindly follow what the Guru tells them with faith and surrender.

Thus, there are four paths to Self -realisation.

Most of the time I feel I am dull witted and should only stick to what the Guru says, and yet following exactly what the Guru says is the most difficult. All these though seemingly different paths all crisscross and can be used together specially if one has a Self-realised Guru for, He guides you in each. Sometimes one needs to do sadhana - the practices of ashtanga yoga, sometimes one needs to read scriptures and most of the time one should practice nishkam karma or at least karma phal tyag. Himalayan tradition embraces every path and encourages the practice suited to your aptitude. Our aptitude changes every now and then too- and this is because all sadhana is in the field- I.e. Prakruti which by nature is changeful. In fact, another name for Prakruti should be Mutater- one which mutates!

Shankara: The four paths to Self-realization:

Dhyana- means withdrawing by concentration, the sense of hearing and the other senses into Manas, away from sound and sense objects, then withdrawing Manas into the inner intelligence, and contemplating on It. Hence, the comparison: “the crane meditates as it were, the earth meditates as it were, the mountains meditate as it were.” (Chhand. Up 7-6-1). Dhyana is a continuous and unbroken thought like a stream of flowing oil. By meditation the Yogins behold the Self.

Jnana- The inner Intelligence is the Self, by the Self, by their own intelligence of the antahkarna refined by Dhyana. Sankhya consists in thinking thus- Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are gunas, Atman is the witness of their acts, external and distinct from the Gunas. By Sankhya Yoga some behold the Self in the Self by the Self.

Karma - That action which is performed in the service of the Lord- Ishvara leads to purity of mind[sattva] which gives rise to Knowledge and yoga happens.

Some not being able to know the Self by the means described above, following the instructions and just having faith in the wise One, also attain. The Acharyas instruct them- “do thou thus meditate upon this” and they then engage in worship i.e. they contemplate with full faith. Even they, cross the ocean of

sansar which is associated with death. Even they whose equipment while commencing to tread the path of moksha consists in what they have heard, i.e. they solely depend upon the authority of other's instructions and are themselves ignorant. How much more so then, who can independently appreciate evidence and discriminate. Even those who are devoted to Shruti-scriptures and follow their authority.

Note: Summary of shlokas 26/27/28 is that:

Of what sort is this union of Kshetra and Kshetrajnya? The Union between the object and the subject, which are opposed to each other in nature, is of mutual adhyaasa i.e. it consists in confounding them, as well as their attributes, with each other owing to, the absence of a discrimination between the nature of Kshetra and that of Kshetrajnya, like the union of a rope with the snake and of the mother of pearl shell with silver. They are mistaken, one for another owing to the absence of discrimination. The union which is of the nature of adhyaasa [superimposition] is a sort of illusion [mithyajnyana] and this illusion vanishes because of right Knowledge when a man attains to the realization of the distinction between Kshetra and Kshetrajnya.

When he is able to separate Kshetra from Kshetrajnya [like ishika reed and the munja-grass, his karma is burnt to ashes by the fire of knowledge] and he realises Brahman, the Knowable- Jnyeyam, {which is devoid of all Upadhis as described in the words "It is not said to be existent or non-existent"} as his own Self, when he is convinced that like the elephants and palaces projected by a juggler's act, or like a thing seen in a dream only – Kshetra is non-existent and only appears to be existent, the cause of birth has vanished in such a man. The wise man is not born again, as Avidya is removed. The Oneself in All.

The Lord dwells, in all from Brahma to the immovable[sthara] he is different, from all as He is Imperishable, while the living beings are mutable and they are destructible this being the case with all that is born. For birth is the root of all changing states [bhava vikara]. There can be no state of change once destruction happens, this does not touch the Lord, the one who sees this rightly sees. A man whose eye is affected by timira [eye disease] sees more

moons than one, while the one who sees one moon he alone sees. Thus, *the one who sees the Oneself in all*, undivided truly sees.

Knowledge of the Oneself leads to moksha.

An ignorant man ignores the Self and thereby destroys, *the Self by the self* [due to Avidya- ignorance], whereas, the knower of truth, honours It and therefore does not destroy the Self by the self. The ignorant man therefore moves from one body to another- from destruction to destruction again. Even the real Self is killed, by Avidya in as much as there is no perceptible effect, of Its existence. The ignorant verily kills the self by the self. {One who fails to discover one's true nature commits suicide -is a krupana}.The wise one however sees the Self as distinct from the Upadhis realizes: Prakruti acts, not the Self.

Shloka 29

प्रकृत्यैव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः ।

यः पश्यति तथात्मानमकर्तारं स पश्यति ॥२९॥

He who sees that all actions are performed in every way by Nature (Prakruti) and the Self as the non-doer, he alone verily sees.

The forms and names in the universe are diverse and appear separate but in essence are one, like the waves, bubbles and ripples on the ocean are all water, like the rays of the sun illuminating and reflected in every puddle are form a single source. It is Prakruti that gives names and forms which seems to divide the unity of existence, the underlying Unity is the Self- the one who knows this verily sees.

Man passes through life with two masks, the one he primarily identifies with is the body, and the other subtle one, called Sukshma sharir or the subtle body. The subtle body is the mind, ego, desires, aversions, conditionings and these form a mask, closely adhering so much so, that we mistake the mask for the reality. These two are closely attached to each other, and the mind influences the body in a way that can result in diseases, to quote Sir William Osler- who used to advise his Physician friends- “ask not what kind of disease the patient has, ask what kind of patient has the disease.” This is the process of Nature. In fact, through many lifetimes this subtle mask gets so firm it seems inseparable and yet once clarity dawns it can be dropped and Truth revealed.

Once again, we see Shri Krishna harping on the point that for the Purusha, there is no change, whether It abides in the animate or inanimate aspect of Prakruti. The realised being who has identified with the Purusha aspect, witnesses the dance of Prakruti as an onlooker would, the antics of jugglers and other wayside performers. This results in treating the good and bad equally, the stone and gold equally, the fool and learned equally, the friend and foe equally. The game after all is happening and so it will.

Note: Shankara's commentary summarized as follows.

When, in accordance with the Shastras and of the teacher – he sees that all the various classes of beings abide in the One, in the Self; when he intuitively realizes that all that we perceive is only the Self; when he further sees the origin, the evolution is all from that One, the Self as stated in the shastras [Chan. Up 7-26-1]

“From the Self is life, from the Self is desire, from the Self is love, from the Self is Akaash, from the Self is light, from the Self are the waters, from the Self is manifestation and disappearance, from the Self is food.” – then he becomes Brahman indeed.

The Self has no beginning, no cause. That which has a cause perishes by itself, whereas This does not perish, because having no cause, it has no parts, no qualities. He suffers no destruction though dwelling in the body he does not act and is not tainted. Who then acts? Nature – Prakruti alone acts. **The idea that there is one Who acts and is tainted is a mere illusion- Avidya and nothing else.** It is for this reason that the Lord points out that there is no necessity of performing works [karma] for the devotees of Wisdom, for the Paramhansa- Parivrajakas, who adhere to this doctrine of Supreme Truth – Paramartha Sankhya darshan and have risen above Avidya and Vyavahara [ignorance and experience due to ignorance].

The embodied one – Kshetrajnya the Supreme Self [Paramtman] is One and illumines all bodies, the whole being – Kshetra from Avyakta [the unmanifest] to the unmoving objects, from the Panchmahabhutas [great five elements] down to the firmness. The illustration of the sun serves here the double purpose with reference to the Self- showing that- the Self like the sun reflected in many pots filled with water is only One in all bodies and like the sun He is never soiled.

The teaching of the doctrine is summed up as follows:

Shloka 34

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञयोरेवमन्तरं ज्ञानचक्षुषा ।

भूतप्रकृतिमोक्षं च ये विदुर्यान्ति ते परम् ॥ 34 ॥

Those who thus perceive with the eye of wisdom the difference between the Kshetra and Kshetraajnya, and the phenomenon of liberation from Prakruti and her evolutes, reach the Supreme spirit.

Shankara: They who in this manner perceive the exact distinction, now pointed out between Kshetra and Kshetraajnya – by the eye of wisdom, by means of that Knowledge of the Self which has been generated by the teachings of the shastra and the master [acharya] and who also perceive the non-existence of Prakruti, Avidya, Avyakta the material cause of beings, they reach Brahman, the Real, the Supreme Self, and assume no more bodies.

Summary: The whole of Vedanta is compressed in this discourse, and it is therefore not easy to even intellectually grasp what Shri Krishna is elucidating so painstakingly. It presupposes some basic understanding which now Arjuna has after he has heard Bhagwan and has had the Darshan of Ishvara in Discourse 11. The summary I present here is the intellectual understanding I have received from reading Shankara, listening to Swami Tatadmanand and Nikhilanand and mulling over it.

The Shloka 'O' was interpolated later. The three questions posed were regarding what is Knowledge [jnana] and who is the Knower or Knowable? What is Khetra and Khsetrajnya? What is Prakruti and who is Purusha?

Shri Krishna answers:

Shri Krishna first describes the Kshetra – His lower nature described in discourse 7 and elaborated to include the 24 tatvas of Prakruti here. Shri Krishna also included emotions such as attraction and aversion, desire and delusion in Kshetra as arising due to ignorance Avidya. So, we have the definition of Prakruti as the Kshetra. Shri Krishna then goes on to define Jnana- Knowledge and gives 20 qualities of the Jnani much like the sthitapragnya in discourse 2. All else Shri Krishna concludes is ignorance- Avidya. So, we are exhorted to practice these qualities which the Jnani displays naturally.

Now comes the difficult part because there is no definition for the inconceivable. To define is to confine. Yet the Master that is Shri Krishna and the greatest exponent of Vedanta Shri Adi Shankaracharya – through the method of Karya Karana Prakriya {effect and cause method} shows how the effect which is the Kshetra and therefore, can be perceived, cannot be the cause, which takes from the gross to the subtle cause, and finally to the causeless cause in the following manner – the body and senses are the effect [come into manifestation] and desire, vikaras and the mind is the cause of birth – subtle cause. The cause of manifestation itself is the beginningless infinite substratum Brahman (causeless cause), which is the subject of experience and therefore cannot be experienced, but is the Knower- Knowable- Jneyam through correct Knowledge Jnanam. He is also the Kshetrajnya as he is the Knower of Kshetra and he is the Atman Satchidananda the Self.

Finally, the Self – Atman is the same as Brahman only appears separate due to Avidya ignorance, which can be removed, by recognition of the Self. There is only the One Brahman just like the reflection of the sun in many pots seem like so many suns, in Truth the sun is only One. The Sun does not do (act) anything to cause the reflection, similarly the Self does not ‘do anything’ i.e. It is ‘Akartaa.’ What is more just like the sun cannot be tainted with the dirt in the pots the Self – Brahman remains untainted.

The one who knows this distinction between Kshetra and Kshetrajnya with the eye of wisdom (jnan chakshu) reaches Brahman and does not assume any more bodies.

Summary of summary:

Shri Krishna explains in detail the path of Knowledge and shows a direct path to understanding our true nature at the same time once again, the qualities of the sincere sadhaka and enumerates 20 of them. He then goes on to expound the difference between Prakruti and Purusha -Kshetra and Kshetrajnya, he also tells us of the subtle body how it leaves the physical body at the time of passing. When we have the clarity of understanding of the Atman- the divine in dweller, ego the delusion takes to its heels. One just knows and can experience the unity of the Atman and Brahman. He concludes that such a one is indeed one with Him.

Methods of teaching in Vedanta:

Given below is the methodology of study of Vedanta taken ad verbatim from Swami Dayanand the Master teacher of Vedanta. It is just so illuminating I could not resist making it available to all who read these notes.

1. One of the main methods is cause-effect method which is called **Karana-Karya- Prakriya** in Sanskrit. In this method, the Self is presented as the cause of everything. "From which all these elements have come, by which all these are sustained and unto which all these go back, understand that to be Brahman (Self)".

Brahman, the 'cause' of the world, is Satya (real), an independent reality. The Universe, presented in scripture in the form of five basic subtle and gross elements, is the 'effect' of the cause.

The Universe being an effect is Mithya (apparently real), The scriptures present the 'effect' as neither Satya, that which exists, nor that which does not exist; but as Mithya, that which has a dependent existence.

The individual's physical body, mind and senses are all within 'effect', and are therefore Mithya (apparently real). But the individual's real nature is the limitless consciousness that is the reality of everything.

If a product is non- separate from the cause then the cause and effect are not two separate things. The effect is not from the cause, and the cause being, what it is, is independent of the effect.

The effect is essentially the cause. A clay pot is but clay. If there is more than one pot, then also it is clay.

If the Universe which includes my physical body, sense and mind is from one non-dual Brahman, then the Universe, being an effect, is non- separate from the cause, Brahman.

Brahman, is you the Self. The recognition of this fact that I am the Brahman and that this Universe is non-separate from me, while I am independent of the Universe, is the result of the teaching of Vedanta. That recognition of oneself being the whole, is the ultimate end, called Moksha (liberation).

The Upanishads, praising the one who has the knowledge of one's self as everything, say, "that one crosses the ocean of sorrow."

2 Another important method employed by the Upanishads is the 3 state teaching, called **Avastha- Prakriya** is Sanskrit. This method comes from the Mandukya Upanishad.

The 3 states teaching is the analysis of the three states of experience: waking, dreaming and deep sleep. The purpose of this analysis is to arrive at the true nature of oneself.

The waker and the waking world are absent in both dream and sleep. The dreamer and the dream world are absent in both waking and sleep. In deep sleep both the dreamer and the waker are absent.

If the status of the subject is real, one cannot give up this status at any time. What is intrinsic to an object should be present in the object as long as the object exists. If it is not present, then it is an incidental attribute.

An example often cited in this context is the crystal assuming a colour in the presence of a coloured object. If the colour is intrinsic to the crystal, it will always be present as long as the crystal exists.

But when the coloured object is taken away, the colour, which was seen in the crystal, disappears. Therefore the colour assumed by the crystal is incidental.

In the deep sleep experience there is absence of the subject-object relationship, there is no status of oneself as the subject. Hence, the subject-object status must be assumed to be incidental.

Analysing these experiences, scriptures present the Self as free from all attributes imputed to it. Consciousness is invariable in all the states of experience while consciousness itself is free from any attribute. All attributes like doer-ship and enjoyer-ship are purely incidental.

3. Another well-known method is the 5 Sheath teaching which is known as **Pancha -Kosha- Prakriya** in Sanskrit. This method comes from the Taittiriya Upanishad.

Kosha means a cover, a sheath. The 5 sheaths are presented as the covers for the Self. If the Self is invariable in all the situations, there cannot be any cover for the Self. So how can they be covers?

We have to understand that they are only seeming covers. Born of self-ignorance, there are five universal erroneous notions. The cause for each notion is said to be a sheath.

The five sheaths are:

a) The physical body (Anna-Maya Kosha) is one sheath inasmuch as it is taken to be oneself. I am mortal, I am tall, I am male, I am female, all these notions are imputed to the Self with reference to the physical body. Thus the physical body becomes a sheath.

b) So too, when one says, "I am hungry, I am thirsty," the Self is taken to be subject to hunger and thirst and the physiological system (Prana-Maya Kosha) becomes a sheath.

c) The notions that I am sad, I am agitated, are due to the mind sheath (Mano-Maya Kosha).

d) The intellect (Vijnana-Maya Kosha) is also a sheath because the sense of doer-ship, which is its attribute, is taken to belong to the Self and the notion "I am the doer" is the outcome.

e) And lastly the bliss sheath (Ananda-Maya Kosha) is a sheath with reference to enjoyer-ship, in the form of degrees of experienced happiness. While the presence of the Self is there in all the five sheaths, the Self itself is free from all of them.

4. This methodology is called **Drig- Drishya- Viveka Prakriya** in Sanskrit and is used to differentiate the Self from the objects and experiences it illumines. This teaching methodology is based on the logical premise that the subject cannot be the object, the seer cannot be the seen.

Simply put: I see the horse, therefore, I am not the horse. When the horse moves I need not move. When the horse leaves, I need not leave. The Knower / subject is independent of the known/object. This of course seems obvious. A normal person does not commit the mistake of identifying himself with objects external to the physical body. But the same logic that distinguishes the Self from an external object such as a horse can be easily extended to include objects with which one does identify without a second thought.

For instance, the same five sense organs that perceive the horse, making the horse a known object, also objectify the physical body. Were one's sense organs to be removed, the perception of the world, including the physical body, would cease accordingly. And yet, there is a strong natural identity between one's Self and one's body.

By objectification of objects, of identification such as the body, as well as the

mind, the conscious subject, the one who is the knower of the body and mind, is separated from the object both logically and experientially. Anything that can be objectified is separated from the subject.

When this process is complete the Self alone remains. All else is an object, and is seen to come and go, thus transitory.

The Self is the only constant in experience. The presence of this unchanging Self must be recognised amidst the transitory modifications of the body, mind, and sense organs.

In addition to the above there are a few more Vedantic methods like:

5) The Real and the Apparent (Satya-Mithya-Viveka)

6) Substrate and Name-Form (Adhithana-Nama-Rupa-Viveka)

7) Essential and Non-Essential

8) Change and Changeless (Chala-Achala-Viveka)

9) Non-dual nature of reality (Advaita-Vichara)

10) Location of Objects

11) Resolution of Objects

12) Mirror of Awareness

13) Perception is Creation (Drishti-Srishti-Vada)

14) Nothing ever happened/Non-Origination (Ajati-Vada)

As briefly shown above, the method adopted by the Upanishads are meant to reveal the truth of the self being attribute-free, limitless Brahman [Self]. Since Brahman does not undergo any change whatsoever, the cause-effect method is only meant to unfold the fact that the self is limitless and the world is non-separate from it. The vision of Vedanta is not so much in presenting a cause-effect relationship between Brahman and the Universe as it is in unfolding the Universe as non-separate from Brahman. This recognition of one's self as the whole is the vision of the scriptures.

Indirect and Direct Knowledge.

Words can give indirect or direct knowledge, depending on the relationship between the knower and the object. If the object is away from the knower's immediate experience, words can only give rise to indirect knowledge.

If the object is within the range of the knower's immediate experience, words can bring about direct knowledge. Indirect knowledge becomes direct knowledge when confirmed by experience.

For e.g. Someone gives a detailed description of the appearance and flavour of the tropical jackfruit to a person who has never seen or tasted jackfruit. Subsequently, the latter comes to India where he has the opportunity to sample many tropical fruits strange to him. One day while eating an unknown fruit he tells his host, "This is very good, but someday I would very much like to try jackfruit. I have heard so much about it."

Words have given him indirect knowledge of this fruit. His host replies, "It is jackfruit you are now eating", imparting knowledge of something the guest is at the time experiencing. "Oh", says the traveller, "now I know jackfruit". Words have brought him direct knowledge.

The story of the tenth man. There is another Vedantic story that shows how words can give both, direct and indirect Knowledge. The students were given permission by their guru to go on a pilgrimage. In the course of their journey, they crossed a swift river. After the crossing, the leader of the group assembled them on the river bank and counted them.

He counted nine. The tenth student was missing. He counted again, very slowly, up to nine. Still, there was one missing. The leader looked all around but nowhere could the tenth man be seen. He stood there in shock and despair. An old man a short distance away had been watching the scene. He walked over to the sorrowful leader and asked, "why are you so upset?" The leader told him about the missing tenth person.

The old man looked at the group, smiled a little and said Don't worry. The tenth man got across the river with you. He is here now. I'll show him to you."

One of the other students was more sceptical, but the leader said "I have not seen the tenth man, but this gentleman says he exists and I believe him."

At this juncture in the story the leader has only indirect knowledge that the tenth man exists. Through the words of the old man he has gained indirect knowledge of the existence of the tenth an. The leader has faith in the correctness of the indirect knowledge, faith that the indirect knowledge that the tenth man exists. Through the words of the old man he has gained indirect knowledge, a faith that the indirect knowledge will be confirmed by direct knowledge. It is faith (Shraddha- link to Qualifications module), pending discovery.

The old man's credibility is given weight by the fact that the old man has said "I will show the tenth man to you, here, now.", not sometime later in some other place. The promise held out by the old man does not involve effort on the part of the leader or change of place, or passage of time.

The story continues: The old man tells the leader to assemble all the other boys in front of him in a line. And then he says to the leader "now, come by my side and count these fellows one more time."

The leader counts one more time up to nine and turns to the old man, "Sir! Where is the tenth man?" he demands.

The old man says "Tat Tvam Asi, You are That. You are the tenth man. You the leader who forgot to count himself, are the tenth you are seeking.

The words of the Guru give direct Knowledge of the Self. What kind of Knowledge can the words of a teacher give about oneself? Indirect or direct? I seek knowledge myself, of "I" Where is this "I"? Is it near or away from me? It is neither. It is I, immediate. Words throwing light on oneself will give direct knowledge of "I". Either they must give direct knowledge or no Knowledge at all.

When the teacher, who has knowledge of himself teaches, he will throw light on me which is here, now, the available, immediate me. The knowledge will be direct, immediate knowledge. That is why the teacher of Self- Knowledge and the teaching are regarded as sacred; they are a direct means of knowledge of oneself. The teaching is a body of knowledge in the form of words and sentences – known as Vedanta- which throws light upon oneself. Vedanta is called Shabda Pramana, a verbal means of knowledge. Through words, it is a direct means of knowledge of oneself.

Summary:

1. An established method of teaching is called Sampradaya, a teaching tradition. And a qualified teacher of Vedanta should know and apply the Vedantic methodology in his or her teachings. The flow of traditional knowledge handed down from teacher to student is called Guru-Shishya-Parampara (Guru-Student-Tradition).

2. In the Vedanta teaching tradition, the teaching is greater than the teacher. Whereas in a cult, the guru is considered superior to the teaching.

3. The vision of Vedanta is to establish the identity between the Jiva (individual) and the Self. The essence of the teachings are expressed in the form of Mahavakyas (great sayings). There are four main Mahavakyas in Vedanta.

4. Vedanta employs a number of methods (Prakriyas) to unfold the identity between the individual and the Self. Some of the main methods are: cause-effect method, 3 states method, 5 sheaths method and the seer-seen discrimination.

5. Words can give indirect or direct knowledge, depending on the relationship between the knower and the object. If the object is within the range of the knower's immediate experience, words can give direct knowledge. When the knowledge of Vedanta is fully assimilated, it gives direct knowledge of "I". The words throw light on me, which is here, now, immediate me. This is called Self-Realization.

Reflection and Exercises:

1. What is Kshetra?
2. What is the Kshetrajnya?
3. How are Kshetrajnya and Brahman One?
4. What are qualities of the true sadhaka?
5. Who merges and reaches the Lord? What is your understanding and practice?
6. Write comparative study of the qualities in chapters 2,12,13. Write a short paragraph.
7. Elaborate on shloka 17 of chapter 13. Think you are teaching a child and write. No hifi.
8. Please research the following: is getting over anger a prerequisite for enlightenment? Is it a sign of enlightenment?
9. Enlist the banes of wrong identification.

The reader is encouraged to read the essay on **Karta** from the book **Essays on Ancient Wisdom**, available on the same website.

Discourse 14 - Gunatrayavibhaga Yoga - The Yoga of Division of Three Gunas.

The last discourse was the essence of Vedanta and Shri Krishna was conducting the theoretical knowledge, to Arjuna regarding Brahman and how the Universe becomes manifest. Such profound teachings need utter concentration and some prior learning to be absorbed. When however, the Guru is Shri Krishna Himself, direct experience would lead to a sublime understanding of the Truth. It is said in the Upanishads- ekenaiva jnyatena sarvam eva vidnyatam bhavati – Knowing the One all is known. Continuing in the same vein, Shri Krishna now goes on to further explain Prakruti and the Gunas with which She magically spins her web of Maya. It is through the power of Maya that Brahman plays the game of hide and seek with Itself- this is termed Leela. The first Shakti, Brahman displays is [desire] Icchaa Shakti- ekoham bahusyama- I am One let Me be many, then with [knowledge] Jnana Shakti this Universe comes into Being and through [action]Kriya Shakti it perpetuates. Maya being the mechanism by which samsara propagates.

According to Sankhya Purusha and Prakruti are two separate principles, and it also embraces plurality in that there are as many Purushas as beings. Vedanta however, admits of only the One reality and identifies the diverse forms as an apparent reality due to Maya. At the individual level Maya is defined as Avidya- Ignorance, and at the universal level as Maya. Where does this Avidya reside? In the mind-

मन एव मनुष्याणां कारणं बन्धमोक्षयोः ।

बन्धाय विषयासक्तं मुक्तं निर्विषयं स्मृतम् ॥

“For man, mind is the cause of bondage and mind is the cause of liberation. Mind absorbed in sense objects is the cause of bondage, and mind detached from the sense objects is the cause of liberation.” (Amrita-bindu Upanishad 2)

The locus of ignorance, is in the mind, hence we need to know how to create preparedness for knowledge - the Adhikaritam, and the mechanism of all ignorance which lies in the Gunas affecting the mind. This discourse explains how to prepare the mind to imbibe spiritual wisdom. We now need to learn about the Gunas, which delude us into identification with Prakruti while all the while we are Purusha- pure consciousness. To negotiate this life’s journey Shri Krishna gives us the “knowhow” in this discourse. {Note on Gunas at the end of the discourse}

The first five shlokas are a carryover from the last chapter and explains 'Ultimate Knowledge' once again to Arjuna. Selected shlokas are discussed below to help us go beyond the Gunas and reach the Trigunatit state as expressed by Shri Krishna. In the first few shlokas the commentary of Shankara only is included to get the direction of flow of thought.

Shloka 1

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

परं भूयः प्रवक्ष्यामि ज्ञानानां ज्ञानमुत्तमम् ।

यज्ज्ञात्वा मुनयः सर्वे परां सिद्धिमितो गताः ॥ 1 ॥

Shri Bhagwan said: I shall expound once again the supreme knowledge, the best of all knowledge, acquiring which all sages have attained highest perfection, being liberated from this mundane existence.

Shankara: Though declared more than once in the preceding discourses, Shri Krishna says- "again I will expound the Supreme Being, and the best of all knowledge as productive of the best result." The knowledge given here refers to that which leads to salvation and not that, which helps one attain mundane fleeting gains, as given in the karmakand. Shri Krishna is therefore using the epithets -sublime and best, in order to rouse interest in the minds of the hearer. And having learnt this knowledge all the sages [munis], the sanyasins, those who are devoted to contemplation [manana] have passed from bondage [to body] to liberation, when they leave from here.

Shloka 2

इदं ज्ञानमुपाश्रित्य मम साधर्म्यमागताः ।

सर्गोऽपि नोपजायन्ते प्रलये न व्यथन्ति च ॥ 2 ॥

Those who, by practising this knowledge have entered into My being, are not born again at the cosmic dawn, nor feel disturbed even during the cosmic dissolution [Pralaya]

Shankara: This shloka is extolling the importance of this Knowledge therefore it says the one who has practiced the prerequisites to attain this knowledge attains 'identity -nonseparation' saadharmyam- with Me, Ishvara, Kshetrajnya,

all being synonyms. Having thus attained, he is neither born [na- upajayante]at the cosmic dawn, nor does he get perturbed [vyathanti] at the time of Pralaya.

Shloka 3

मम योनिर्महद् ब्रह्म तस्मिन्गर्भं दधाम्यहम् ।

सम्भवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥ 3॥

My primordial Nature, known as the great Brahma, is the womb of all creatures; in that womb I place the seed of all life. The creation of all beings follows from that union of Matter and Spirit, O Arjuna.

Shankara: Evolution of the Universe is from the union of Spirit and Matter- Purusha and Prakruti. The Lord now proceeds to explain what sort of conjunction of Kshetra and Kshetrajnya is the cause of all beings: My own Prakruti [mahat brahma] i.e. the Maya made of the three gunas, is the material cause of all beings. This Prakruti is spoken of as great because it is greater than all its effects; and as the source and nourishing energy of all its modifications, it is termed Brahman. In that great Brahman I place the germ, the seed[garbha] of the birth of the Hiranyagarbha- which gives birth to all beings. I who am possessed with two Shaktis [potencies]- the two Prakrutis [higher – kshetrajnya and lower the kshetra -discourse 7 shloka 4/5] of Kshetra, and the Kshetrajnya, unite; the Kshetrajnya conforming Himself to the upadhis of Avidya [ignorance], Kama [desire] and Karma [action].

Shloka 4-This act of impregnation gives rise to the birth of all beings through the birth of the Hiranyagarbha. Wombs such as the Devas, the Pitras, men, cattle, beasts, etc. I am the Ishvara, the Father, the author of impregnation of the seed[beeja] in the womb. {Ref. to shloka 26 Discourse13}

The Gunas bind the soul.

Shloka 5

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसम्भवाः ।

निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥ 5॥

Sattva Rajas and Tamas, these three gunas born of nature tie down the imperishable soul to the body, Arjuna.

The Hindu scriptures say the undifferentiated consciousness which is the indivisible unity resides as Vishnu on the coils of the serpent Anant on the sea. It is called Vishnu which means all pervading. The three forces arising as it were from this undifferentiated state like the web arises out of the spider are the three strands of Sattva Rajas and Tamas.

- Sattva is - law, harmony, balance
- Rajas is - energy
- Tamas is -inertia.

The simile of Ice, water and vapour serves well in explaining- tamas is ice- the block that just sits there or the obstacle to any movement. Rajas is like water ready to flow and moves into either the mundane world of desire, adventure, financial acquisitions, etc. etc., or the force to help us in our inward journey. By using the energy that Rajas is, we get over tamas indolence rise early and sit for meditation etc. Rajas can take either direction depending on the sanskaras or latent tendencies. It is most definitely a power and a certain restlessness, which we often see in the world being directed to false pursuits. Tamas on the other hand leads to inertia and dependence. Sattva is the gateway to the kingdom of heaven within for it results in a clear calm mind which can then comprehend the Truth. It results in selfless service which is the proof that God is acting through us.

There is no better way of describing personalities, and yet one finds even in the same personality at different times one or the other Guna predominates. The benefit of knowing this is the possibility it creates for self-observation and transformation. When we notice a lot of agitation within us, that is the time to meditate, when we find indolence that is when we should take a walk or move- so the possibility of changing our personality is available to us at all times.

The three stranded rope of the Gunas, tie down the imperishable Atman to the perishable aspects of Prakruti. These three Gunas as explained in detail by Eknath are the forces of Prakruti in its manifest form. The Akshara Param Brahman, weaves this web (Prakruti) verily like the spider out of its own self, the yarn is made of the three gunas. As we have seen, the interplay of these three qualities is so subtle, that we get deluded into believing that we are the

image formed by them. By this I mean a persona, is woven onto the Self which fits so tight that the Self is lost and the persona masquerades in its place looking for the Self in the outer world, which again is a play of the Gunas. Thus, we are endlessly caught in the web, not of our own making but a divine web, until we find our own source as the Self, we shall keep wandering in its patterns.

Note: Visha- to abide annu- every atom- the One who abides in every atom is Vishnu. He is depicted as resting on a massive, coiled serpent Anant Sheshanag on the surface of the ocean of milk. All of these are allegorical stories and have a multitude of meanings.

Shankara: commentary on shloka 5: Guna is a technical term. It does not mean a property, attribute or quality such as colour, as opposed to the substance in which it is said to inhere. There is no separate existence of a guna, and the inherent attribute of a substance is what is meant in this discourse. The Gunas here are so called because they are dependent here on another – namely Kshetrajnya, the gunas are only forms of avidya and they bind fast ‘as it were’ the Kshetrajnya. Born of the Lord’s Maya they bind fast ‘as it were’ the indestructible Self. The objection to this is that the embodied one is not tainted [disc. 13 sh.31] how then, on the contrary it is said here that the gunas bind him? The objection is already met by qualifying the statement by ‘as it were.’ Maya is the term used for the creative power of Brahman as related to this manifest Universe. Avidya is the term used for the individual who, deluded thus by ignorance[avidya] moves from birth to death, death to birth.

Shloka 6

तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।

सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥ 6॥

Of these, sattva being immaculate, is illuminating and flawless, Arjuna; it binds through attachment to happiness and knowledge.

As Rajas binds with the glamour of the pseudo gratification of the senses, and tamas binds with indolence and ignorance - sattva binds with the promise of joy [sukhsanghen] and happiness and [cha] by wordy knowledge [Jnyansnaghen] anagha [Arjuna- sinless one]. Even this quality belongs to the personality and as long as the personality exists Self-realisation cannot happen. It is however, essential to develop satvic tendencies which lead to purity and

clarity of mind [nirmala, prakasham, anaamayam- flawless]to aid our inward journey and build the strong will, required for persistent effort in the right direction. It can be developed by giving up some favourite food, or taking a Sankalpa to do a certain number of repetitions of the name of the Lord- japa in a specified time etc.

Once again Eknath describes the traits of persons with each of the Gunas:

The rajas predominant person is full of drive and is a 'go getter' but with a weak will. He cannot act against his desires, and the desires take him to the end of the world for fulfilment. He carries his office home and into bed too, cannot fall asleep his mind is thinking all the time. Yet the will can be developed with training, and this sort of a person is better off than the tamasic person who procrastinates, is unable to mobilise himself he feels the effort is not worth the result. He thus has fewer desires and is a couch potato. He would rather not desire than exert to fulfil any. He also sleeps easily, at the same time his mind is thinking all the time, for it does not take effort to think, and it is a habit. He has a weak will difficult to train as his desire to change is also postponed all the time. Only the sattvic person is balanced and energetic, at the same time with a strong will, which can channel the energy to fields which serve humanity, not expecting any reward for himself. Such a being is Brahman in action.

Shankara: explains the attribute happiness or joy is in the realm of the Kshetra as explained in the last discourse by the Lord. It causes the Kshetrajnya to believe he is happy – i.e. the subject identifies with the object and thus gets deluded. The subject is the observer it can never be the object- that is an illusion -Maya. When we express happiness do, we not say 'I am happy?' then who is this I? It is not happy, but it gets deluded into being attached to happiness 'as it were.' Similarly, attachment to knowledge appears, in the same way as to happiness. Both happiness and knowledge or sadness and ignorance are states of mind [object]- behind which is the Observer, the Subject.

Shloka 7

रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् ।
तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम् ॥ ७ ॥

Arjuna, know the quality of Rajas, which is of the nature of passion as born of desire and attachment. Binds the soul through attachment to actions and their fruit.

Rajas binds us with I, me, and mine and throws us into prison. It drives us to make and market things not required by others, making them believe they will otherwise lag behind. It just wants to mindlessly accumulate. It gets entangled in its own creation. It does not mind who it hurts along the way it knows what it wants and goes ahead, to get it, bulldozing all along the way. The only saving grace is it can be transformed to sattva. Eknath gives the great example of lichen(a complex life form in which the algae and fungus live together depending on each other- the fungus is dominant) while discussing how two opposites, can live symbiotically, in perfect harmony in spite of being diametrically opposite. This is how a marriage relationship can be constructive. However, more so today than ever before- a competitiveness has been instilled in man and woman and the charm of a loving harmonious relationship destroyed.

Rajas is the most dominant Guna in the mundane world. Today an infant is taught competition, and performance and the applause they receive rings in their ears, till they end craving for it, right till they reach their grave. Yet naturally by the time they are adults, they are all burnt out, and know not what to do with themselves. They venture into the field called creation, innovation and manufacture! or build and social service- NGOs who are notorious in self-aggrandisement. Yet Shri Krishna has said, better Vikarma than akarma - for the direction of the momentum can be changed but if there is no motion at all it is difficult to inspire a stone- only Shri Rama could do it.

Shankara: Rajas is of the nature of passion, colouring (the soul) like a piece of red chalk. Know it to be that from which arises thirst and attachment. Thirst after what has not been attained, attachment or mental adherence to what has been attained. It binds fast, the embodied Self by attachment to action, by making him attached to actions productive of visible and invisible results, drushya and adrushya karma.

Shloka 8

तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।

प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ॥ ८॥

And know Tamas, the deluder of all those who look upon the body as their own self, as born of ignorance. It binds the soul through error, sleep and sloth, Arjuna.

Swami Rama has taken all the above shlokas together as they elaborate one theme- the play of the Gunas. Prakruti creates the drama of manifestation with the help of the three Gunas which are never in balance, unless disciplined spiritual life is practiced. The Sattva Guna brings one joy, delight, calmness and clarity. It can be enhanced with regular meditation. The Rajo Guna is responsible for craving and aversion and drives an individual even to commit crime if not brought into check. At the same time Rajo Guna individuals can be constructive and creative if directed properly. Tamoguna creates indolence and sloth, and negativity. When Tamoguna is predominant individuals are fat, flabby and depressed, they find no joy in life and are filled with negativity.

The true way is to be focused on spiritual practice and see through the drama of Prakruti.

Eknath has discussed Tamas at great length for it is one of the major drawbacks of modern society. The first word Shri Krishna has used here is 'pramad' which means lack of earnestness, this is a fatal error. The second adjective of Tama is 'alasya' which translates as laziness and this leads to procrastination with any number of excuses, being made for not having completed or even started a job. The third is Nidra- sleep- is often seen in academic lectures, **in fact a professor is defined as a person who talks in other peoples' sleep. So, on the slightest pretext Mr. Tamas likes to sleep.** This is not a physical but rather an emotional response to any upheaval in life. He feels he can just avoid being answerable. Perhaps the only thing Tamas responds to is fear- they detest change and would like to remain in a groove, so that no effort is necessary. Sluggishness, listlessness, are some adjectives to describe him. He tends to put on weight easily and is susceptible to addiction. Another word for Tamas is darkness, the darkness of ignorance- that is why one prays for the light of knowledge to illumine our minds.

It's not all gloomy though for all of it can be changed - indeed the Buddha says every moment whether you know it or not you are changing. The first step towards getting out of this mould would be to mobilise oneself - by walking, brisk walking regularly and then to take up some absorbing hobby or creative pursuit which engages your entire attention. Slowly meditation can be added and pursued and soon we reverse the situation which seemed so dreary. Patanjali says that an earnest seeker is bound to succeed.

These gunas and their expression have been thoroughly covered by Eknathji. My take is that we can identify within us all of these qualities which arise in us at different times and may linger to a greater or lesser extent which then seem to define our character. It must be noted that the soul or Jiva gets deluded by these gunas and therefore has to return, again and again, to etch a way out of them. It is indeed possible to transform Tamas into rajas and rajas into sattva with practice, discipline and persistence.

Shloka 11

सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन्प्रकाश उपजायते ।

ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद्विवृद्धं सत्त्वमित्युत ॥ 11 ॥

When Light and discernment dawn on in this, as well as in the mind and senses, then one should know that Sattva is predominant.

Shloka 12

लोभः प्रवृत्तिरारम्भः कर्मणामशमः स्पृहा ।

रजस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे भरतर्षभ ॥ 12 ॥

With the preponderance of Rajas Arjuna, greed, activity, undertaking of action with an interested motive, restlessness and a thirst for enjoyment make their appearance.

Shloka 13

अप्रकाशोऽप्रवृत्तिश्च प्रमादो मोह एव च ।

तमस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे कुरुनन्दन ॥ 13 ॥

With the growth of Tamas, Arjuna, obtuseness of the mind and senses, disinclination to perform one's obligatory duties, frivolity and stupor – all these appear.

Shloka- 14/ 15/ 16 summed up by Shankara in a single line:

Life after death is accordingly governed by the Gunas. Those with Sattva predominant go to the higher realms of the Devas, those with rajas predominant go to the middle realms of men, and those with tamas predominant go to the lower realms they will be born in the wombs of cattle and other creatures.

Shloka 16

कर्मणः सुकृतस्याहुः सात्त्विकं निर्मलं फलम् ।

रजसस्तु फलं दुःखमज्ञानं तमसः फलम् ॥ 16॥

The reward of a righteous act they say is Satvic ie. faultless in the form of joy, wisdom and dispassion etc., sorrow is declared to be the fruit of a Rajasic act and ignorance, the fruit of a Tamasic act.

Swami Rama: Life is a sentence beginning with the comma of birth and ending with the comma of death. The meaning of the sentence cannot be understood unless we know what came before and what follows. Life should be a preparation for the journey to the infinite. Those who perform good actions without expecting any reward get liberated, but they come again and again to help others and continue to perform these sattvic actions. While those who perform actions with a selfish motive are rajasic and get painful results. They live in the fear of death. Those who are tamasic get rebirth in lower life forms. Sattva leads to Knowledge; Rajas leads to desire and tamas to ignorance.

Eknath: Sattva leads to kindness and a kind act leads to a pure heart, no malice, no ill feeling, no desire to cling to this or that and ultimately to regard everyone worthy of receiving kindness, no matter how the other responds. Moving away from difficult people serves no purpose, neither heals nor seals the breach. The rajasic tendency covets, has the energy to make every effort, but this is in the direction of acquisitions and is unable to take you inwards. The fruit of rajas is sorrow, sometimes unknowingly, like the one who works in a tobacco company ends up being the cause of so much sorrow for others and eventually for himself. The tamasic is content to do as little, as possible and becomes

insensitive to anything outside of themselves, and unable to work out their karmas and only proceed from darkness to darkness.

All the three gunas are active in each individual and no one belongs to one or other Guna completely, and their proportions also change from time to time. We do notice personality traits however, with the predominance of one or other guna. The consolation is recognising these traits in us we can use the power of Rajas to turn all of these traits into sattvic ones. When we notice laziness, we can start some activity that is pleasant and then transform it into what is good- from preyas to shreyas as explained in the Kathopanishad, Nachiket asks the God of Death- Yama what is the way to overcome You? Then Yama unfolds the Truth before young Nachiket who is not tempted by any other boon offered by Yama. He explains that what is good is called shreyas - and even though it may seem difficult it should be pursued because the end result is well-being. That is called preyas which does not lead our well-being, although the action may seem easy and pleasant at first. One who consistently chooses Shreyas over Preyas, is using his/her sattva guna and is surely able to get outside the purview of death, to eternal life. Here, I would like to quote Goenkaji who defines people into four categories- 1. Those who move from darkness to darkness. 2. Those who move from darkness to light. 3. Those who move from light to darkness and 4. Those who move from light to light. Tamasic are those belongings to the first category. Rajasic are those who may belong to the second or third and Sattvic are those belongings to the fourth.

Summary of shlokas 17-19: Shlokas 17/18 still explain the result of the sattva rajas and tamo gunas-as wisdom, greed and obstinacy respectively. As also, where this would lead to in the future, higher realm, middle and the lowest realms. Emotional and psychological problems can never be fully overcome such is the very nature of what the mind and body are made viz. the gunas. Consciousness alone – our true nature, is free of problems.

Shloka 19 onwards the tune changes – of how to and who transcends the Gunas. The one who sees that the agent of action karta is none other than the gunas and the one who transcends the Gunas -sees himself as other than the gunas, he attains Me.

Shloka 19: Shankara: Purushasya prakrutatasthatva rupena mithyagnyanen yuktasya bhogeshu guneshu sukha dukkha mohaatkameshu sukhi dukhi

mohaatasmī. For a person engaged with the gunas, established in the form of Prakṛti due to delusion[mithyagyaṇ] experiences happiness, sadness and delusion [result of Sattva, Rajas, tamas guna] as 'I am happy, sad, or deluded.' The one who knows himself as beyond [param]the gunas, truly knows.

Shloka 20

गुणानेतानतीत्य त्रीन्देही देहसमुद्भवान् ।

जन्ममृत्युजरादुःखैर्विमुक्तोऽमृतमश्नुते ॥ 20 ॥

Having transcended the aforesaid three Gunas which have caused the body, and freed from birth, death and old age and all kinds of sorrow the embodied soul attains supreme bliss.

Swami Rama: the perfect seer has seen through the play of the Gunas and does not identify with them. He stays aloof and beyond the drama of mundane life. The body functions as it is made to, by the gunas, but he is untouched and unaffected by disease, old age and death, which affect only the body. Realisation of the Self beyond the gunas leads to immortality.

Eknath: Everything we are familiar with has been woven by the Gunas- things, thoughts, emotions, actions, so when Shri Krishna is asking us to go beyond the gunas it is almost as if he is asking us to go beyond the human condition but the truth is, Shri Krishna is asking us to go beyond human conditionings! The conditioning that we are obsessed with is that we are the body and mind. When we strive for the happiness of others, and the welfare of all like the Buddha, a tremendous force is released within us which then works to elevate the consciousness of all. Eknath has observed that in the early sixties it was popular to use psychoactive drugs to reach altered states of consciousness and this could be termed "chemical grace". Today there is another wave- that of the "electronic grace" once again much the same. The physicists could pick up the waves of anger, impatience, irritation and then have hooked transformers to change these to patience and mood elevations. At what expense? The sensitiveness, creativity, originality, tenderness would all be lost. Available today are "illumination tanks" where you are locked in and every possible sensory stimulus is removed, till you experience enlightenment. This however does not address the control of desire and strengthening of the will, as soon as one is out of the tank the hungry senses will chase sensory gratification. It is

only through meditation that the will is so strengthened that senses can delude it no more, then you rise above the gunas. Beyond the gunas whatever action is now undertaken is termed by the Gita as “action in inaction”

To transcend the gunas one must first have an intellectual understanding of why one needs to do so, then one must constantly keep reminding oneself by observing thoughts and emotions, creating a space or a pause. As one gets accomplished in doing this the yearning to learn more arises, and teachers look for you. Soon you get entranced, by the magic of spiritual discovery. Vivek and Vairagya are bestowed on you and the Grace of the Guru guides with gentle steps initially, and giant leaps later to go where? Nowhere, just clearly see, that we are not this body or mind which is the conditioning with which we are so obsessed.

Note: In shloka 21 Arjuna asks Shri Krishna, ‘what are the marks of him who has gone beyond the gunas?’

Bhagwan answers from shloka 22 onwards saying the one who does not abhor anything arising from the three gunas-including illumination [sattva], activity [rajas] or stupor [tamas], when present, nor longs for them when absent. The following shlokas further describing the Gunatit Being are the selected ones:

Shlokas 24/25

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।
तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दात्मसंस्तुतिः ॥ 24 ॥
मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।
सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥ 25 ॥

He who is equipoised in honour and ignominy, is alike to friend or enemy, and has renounced the sense of doership in all undertakings, is said to have risen above the three Gunas.

Sri Krishna explains to Arjuna the signs of one who has transcended the gunas. Sattva emanates light, Rajas- activity and tamas delusion. The one who has transcended the gunas does not become imbalanced, whichever Guna may be predominant. He is forever equanimous and content in loss or gain, honour or

dishonour. No matter what happens he is not disturbed for he knows this melodrama, is all a play of the gunas. Whether sattva is in sway or Rajas creates havoc, or tamas tries to cloud his mind- these gunas have no hold on him. Such is the man who has gone beyond the gunas.

The word svasthaha- which literally means seated in your Self is emphasized by Eknath. He gives the example of a five-year-old boy trying to sit in the lap of an uncle, aunt and guest when each refused, he was frustrated, and simply said “then I will sit in my own lap”. That is the safest and most secure place to sit in. Eknath then goes on to relate a funny incident when his wife had lost her library card, and they went to get a duplicate. As it happened due to technical problems the receptionist could not issue another one immediately, but she suggested brightly that one could be issued in Eknathji’s name. She asked if he could produce his identity - “of course” he replied, “that is my profession!” She wanted a card to prove it, he explained the only card he had was the membership card of the Blue Mountain Meditation centre, and while he was trying to take it out of his wallet, out fell his wife’s library card! So he says Shri Krishna is trying to tell you - it is all, all in you just dig deep enough.

My own humble experience and understanding is that keeping vigilant, one may reach a state of equanimity in the face of sorrow or joy, gain or loss simply because, all is passing and is in a state of constant flux. No other tradition teaches the changing nature of life better than the Buddhist tradition. As one constantly observes- passing, passing, fleeting, fleeting- sensations, moods, and the panorama of life one realises the futility of grasping and aversion. Releasing the tendency to cling and dropping all aversion, one can most certainly attain a state of equilibrium, and with devotion one ascends into the realm of the Lord. The wise Gunatit Being has both transcended and ascended into the absolute, consciousness and bliss state.

To conclude this discourse, I am quoting Shankara’s commentary on the last two shlokas:

A sanyasin [yati], or even a man of works [karmin]. Who serves Me- the Ishvara, Narayan- dwelling in the hearts of all beings, with a never-failing Bhakti Yoga, in devotion to discriminative knowledge [Vivek], he crosses beyond the three

Gunās mentioned above and is fit for becoming Brahman [moksha]. Bhakti yoga being indeed the result of the Grace and Mercy of the Lord.

The Unity of Atman.

For in Me, the Pratyagatman, the true inner Self abides Brahman, the Supreme Self [Paramatman] who is immortal and immutable who is eternal Dharma, who is attainable by the Dharma of Jnana Yoga or wisdom, devotion, who is the unfailing Bliss immortal. It is through His Ishvara Shakti, through the power He has to manifest Himself as Ishvara or the Lord of the Universe, that Brahman shows His Grace to His devotees.

By Brahman here is meant the Conditioned Brahman, who alone can be spoken of by any such word as Brahman. The Unconditioned and the unutterable, am the abode of the conditioned Brahman, who is immortal and Indestructible. I am also the eternal Dharma of wisdom-Devotion, and the abode of the Bliss born of that Devotion.

Summary:

*The discourse begins with extolling the greatness of the knowledge here told, for it leads to liberation. The mechanism by which the Universe comes into manifestation, how Maya weaves her web through the three Gunas which entangle and mesmerise the mind into the deluded state of mistaking the appearance for REALITY. By **self-observation** that is by [atma vichara] observation of the mind [noticing thoughts] one gets the ability to **transform** tamas into rajas and rajas into sattva. The need to develop sattva is the clarity it affords the mind, to then reflect Truth in all Its shining glory. This enables man to go beyond the Gunas which verily means beyond time. The state beyond the three Gunas is the ultimate goal. Finally, the characteristics of the one who reaches it and how he behaves, much like in discourse 2 the description of the sthitapradnya is explained, and the practices leading us to that state is indicated. In the final verse the theme of the next discourse- Purshottama is introduced.*

Note on: What does Udasina mean? {this word appears in dis.6 sh.9, dis.9 sh.9, dis.12 sh. 16}

Udasi (*Gurmukhi: ਉਦਾਸੀ ਸੰਪਰਦਾ; udāsī saparadā*) is a religious sect of ascetic sadhus centred in northern India. The word Udasi is derived from the Sanskrit word udasin, meaning 'detached, journey', reflecting an approach to spiritual and temporal life, or from udas ('detachment'), signifying indifference to or renunciation of worldly concerns. The Udasis considered secular pursuits to be incompatible with personal salvation, which was to be achieved only through renouncing the world, espousing asceticism and a monastic traveller lifestyle. Udasis are known for their Akharas along with the Nirmala sect of Sikhism.

The udasis also worship the panchayatana, the five Hindu deities: Shiva, Vishnu, Durga, Ganesha and Surya.

Reflection and Exercises:

1. Can Vishayananda be continuous? Dwell and answer.
2. What should be abolished? The identity, but first it must be cherished. Why? Let me know your thoughts.
3. Define karta as per the Bhagavad Gita. (refer to essay on Karta in the book *Essays on Ancient wisdom*)
4. What are the three Gunas?
5. What does Shri Krishna mean to you?
6. Give an example of how you converted one Guna into the other[transformation] through self- observation.

The reader is encouraged to read the essay on **Gunas** from the book **Essays on Ancient Wisdom**, available on the same website.

Discourse 15 - Purushottam Yoga - The yoga of the Supreme Person.

In the last discourse we learnt about the intricacies of Prakruti and the mechanism of the fabric of Creation. Now Shri Krishna is about to unravel the mystery of the Pursuhottama- Ishvara- who is in essence the same as Khetrajnya, the real nature of Self. The knowledge shared in discourse 13 is being unfolded further. We were taught that Kshetrajnya is imperishable, changeless, infinite and eternal in contrast to the perishable, ever changing, limited kshetra through which it becomes manifest. In this most esoteric discourse Shri Krishna reveals that the Supreme Spirit- Purushottama is not merely an antithesis of the phenomenal world presented to our senses. It is the Unconditional Eternal Factor [Chinmayananda] also called Absolute by other philosophers. On a practical note I would like to add that until this level of experiential understanding is reached the illusion of being a limited identity as a person does not get dispelled.

Shri Krishna first begins with a description of *samsara* metaphorically comparing it to a tree which has roots both above and below the earth and creates this illusion of reality! ***The only way He says to overcome it is to use the axe of Vairagya- non-attachment!*** {27.12.24 it is thoroughly understood} Then once again, Shri Krishna gives us a peek, into the glory that He the Absolute is!

Shloka 1

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखमश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम् ।

छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥ 1॥

Sri Bhagawan said: He who knows the Pipala tree (in the form of creation); which is said to be imperishable with its roots in the Primeval Being (God) whose branch is represented by Brahma (the Creator), and whose leaves are the Vedas, is a knower of the purport of the Vedas.

Shloka 2

अधश्चोर्ध्वं प्रसृतास्तस्य शाखा

गुणप्रवृद्धा विषयप्रवालाः ।

अधश्च मूलान्यनुसन्ततानि

कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके ॥ 2॥

Fed by the three Gunas and having sense objects for their tender leaves, the branches of the aforesaid tree(in the shape of the different orders of creation) extend both downwards and upwards; and its roots, which bind the soul according to its actions in the human body, are spread in all the regions higher as well as lower.

He is considered a knower of the Vedas [the practical knower of its teachings] who knows the Aswatha tree which has its roots in heaven and its branches spread upward and downward. The leaves of this tree are the Vedas – the Vedas expounded the secret of creation and in those times all Karma was done according to the injunctions of the Vedas. The leaves of a tree do the function of nourishing and sustaining the roots both being interdependent. This metaphor has been mentioned in Kathopanishad, Mundaka Upanishad and the Atharvaveda and Rigveda. Bhagvad Gita mainly teaches the same knowledge. The gunas cause the objects of senses to sprout on this tree.

The Ashwatha tree is described here as imperishable, although it is considered transitory, this is so because the potentiality remains although the forms keep on changing. It is said that the sun will eventually perish and lose all the energy it has for there is a limit to it. But what has happened to all the energy radiated? So, forms keep on changing the whole of creation is as imperishable as the Creator. As Swami Veda says the Pravaha [flow] is eternal!

“This image of the Tree of Life is one of the most magnificent in the Gita.” Eknath. The whole phenomenal universe -matter, energy, and mind- is only its canopy of leaves. The taproot is the Lord, the eternal, changeless Self. These trees also have aerial roots which twine around other trees until they reach the ground, the senses and desires are these aerial roots- which then root us to this changing world. In today’s age of advertising- the mass of humanity has been sold to gratification of the senses as the highest tide, and each sense is drawn into its respective field e.g. tongue- junk food, eyes- videos and movies, ears- quadraphonic sound. Once consciousness is pulled out into the senses it is almost as hard to withdraw it into the inner chamber as it is to pull back squeezed out toothpaste. Once we learn to withdraw our consciousness- there is a tremendous consolidation of energy, and we can keep on conserving

instead of dissipating it. Every morning, we should check our willometer to build up our WQ (will quotient).[Eknath]

The practical application of this image is tremendous- as long as we remain on the surface- at the leaves, twigs even branch level- we remain separate but when we finally tap the tap root we know the secret. The little leaf is our personality.

Aswatha is the name given to the tree, it may come under both categories- ficus bengakensis- banyan or ficus religiosa- the pipal tree. Shankara has defined it as: a-without, shva-tomorrow, stha-standing. This is the tree of what will not be here tomorrow- i.e. all created things. Can this tree be felled? Yes, this can be done, with meditation and once we discover the riches of the inner realm, we would laugh at the third class pull from the senses.

The phenomenal universe cannot be experienced without duality- there has to be a subject / object relationship in order to experience. This inevitably leads to separation and identification. Once identity arises the entire gamut of body, mind, senses, objects- are born and sansar begins. Keeping in mind the pointer Bhagwan shows in the 9th chapter shloka 4, we may be able to develop - discernment and reach the taproot of this humungous tree and not dilly dally on its branches. I say may be able to because our attention gets so easily distracted by the many beautiful sights, sounds and taste, fragrances and the touch of the gentle breeze this tree offers. Yet not forgetting its name- ashvatha- without tomorrow stands- one can develop **nonattachment** even while listening to the cooing of the birds.

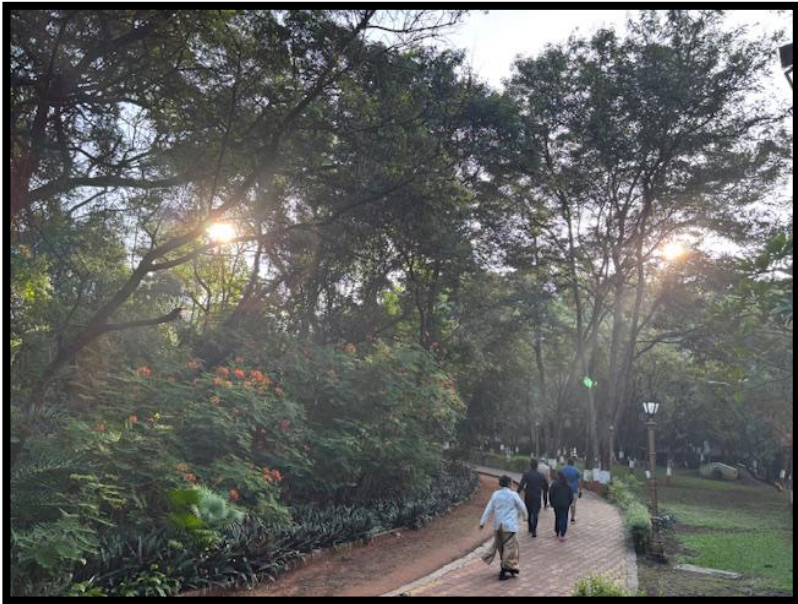
[Discourse 9 shloka 4 The whole universe is permeated by Me as unmanifest Divinity, like ice by water and all beings dwell on the idea within Me. But really speaking, I am not present in them.]

It struck me as I thought of the human anatomy that the tracheobronchial tree indeed has its tap root above and myriad branches- bronchioles below with alveoli-airs sacs sprouting at the end of each. Might the ancient Rishis be alluding to this tree which indeed is the vital force within this body?

On REFLECTION, it also struck me that this tree of life is inverted because it is a REFLECTION in our mind too! The fruit of happiness on the tree can never be reached, in the reflection, one only ends up getting wet[cries!] It does indicate though, that Happiness and Fulness exist, just change the direction you are seeking in.

The Pratibimba Vaad in Advaita Vedanta is one of the explanations for Brahma Satya Jagat Mithya - Only Brahman is REAL the Universe is Unreal [a reflection only].

Note on Chidabhasa: INSIGHTS ON CHIDABHASA- 4.11.25



In this picture, which is the REAL SUN? Where on earth do two suns rise simultaneously?

One is obviously a REFLECTION – which one? {the one on the left just for record} Does it make a difference? It most certainly does. The upama -simile of the reflection of consciousness being one of the major explanations, for

Consciousness / Brahman, is no fluke- Our Rishis must have observed this phenomenon.

The PRATIBIMBA VAAD made perfect sense today. The insights that followed are:

- 1. The light of Consciousness reflected off the mind, reveals the Jagat, which is also reflecting the light, albeit in a subdued way.*
- 2. This **Chidabhasa** is so **powerful** because it is used by the body/mind [in this case the building glass at a great height]. Here the building depicts the body/mind, which then takes it for granted that the **LIGHT BELONGS TO ITSELF- nay, IS its self- Ego!***
- 3. This happens in every body /mind; 700+billion humans and all sentient creatures to a greater or lesser degree including plants. The result is perception/ sensation / feelings/ thoughts, very similar in **all, lending even more reality to the reflection.***
- 4. The Bhagvat Gita Ch. 11. Shloka 12 where Sanjay describes the Glory of The Lord as the rising of **the million suns all simultaneously in the sky-** The firmament in the analogy is the expanded consciousness of Arjuna and the light of the million suns is the **Knowledge of Reality** as it becomes apparent what the **source is- no wonder then, the fear of losing the reflection he felt he was.***
- 5. The question that begs asking is – **does this reflection have reality?** Does this reflection get tainted? How is it different from the sun? The reflection depends on the medium reflecting it hence gets tainted, gets bound. Being only a reflection, it certainly is different from the Sun, and depends entirely on the Sun for its existence.*
- 6. Can this reflection help see the **REAL SUN?** Yes, for the **redreflecting medium is our Intellect where ignorance resides- once the reflection is perfect there is no chance for ignorance to survive, and also as the intellect is getting purified the reflection is more exact and it helps***

remove the dirt of ignorance in the nooks and crannies of our mind [hidden sanskaras and vasanas] Once ignorance is rooted out – clarity of the source is revealed.

- 7. Does the reflection change? On what does it depend? The reflection as such, changes according to the mind that reflects it and it depends on the purity of the mind.***
- 8. How is the reflecting surface formed? By Ishvara- Maya's sattvic guna.***
- 9. Who or what knows? The intellect finally knows the source as the darkness of ignorance is removed.***

Shankara: The Shruti – Kathopanishad says “with roots above and branches below this Ashwatha is eternal.”

The Puranas also say: “The root from which the eternal tree of Brahman has sprung is the Avyakta, the Unmanifest etc. It has developed by the strength of the same [Avyakta]. Its trunk is Buddhi, the sense apertures Its hollows, the great elements Its boughs, the sense -objects Its leaves and branches, Dharma and Adharma its fair blossoms, pleasure and pain Its fruits affording livelihood to all creatures. Having cut asunder and split the tree with the mighty sword of knowledge and then attained to the Bliss of the Self, none comes back from there again.”

They call this tree Ashwatha because it will not abide even till tomorrow, because it undergoes destruction every moment. The illusion [Maya] of samsara having existed in time without a beginning, they say this Tree of samsara is eternal; for it rests as is well known on a series of births which is without beginning like a circle, and it is thus eternal. The tree of samsara is further qualified thus: The chandas [metres- Vedas] are its leaves and serve to protect the tree of samsara. The arial roots are the vasanas and karma of dharma and adharma all fed by the three gunas and nourished by them. He who knows it, is therefore omniscient, as nothing else remains to be known, beyond this tree of samsara and its root. Cut the tree and seek the goal.

Shloka 3

न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते
नान्तो न चादिर्न च सम्प्रतिष्ठा ।
अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरुद्धमूल
मसङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्त्वा ॥ ३ ॥

The nature of this tree of creation, does not on mature thought, turnout what it is represented to be; for it has neither beginning nor end nor stability. Therefore, cutting down this Pipal tree, which is most firmly rooted, with the formidable axe of dispassion.

The complexity of one's life is so enormous that it always seems as though we are stuck in this maze. The image of this tree which expresses roots above and below and branches spreading everywhere is demonstrating the complexity of this life and seems as though we are trapped. The way out is now being shown in this shloka. Asya rupam- Of this tree iha- in the world rupam form of this tree na- not upalabhyate- cannot be perceived in this manner[tathaa] i.e. with its roots above. Unmanifest universe became manifest and was not watched before it became manifest. The roots are our karma. The tree has no beginning[aadi] or end[antaha] Na samprathistha- not the continuation is not known or perceptible. Ashwatham suvirudhamulam- this ashwatha tree is well rooted [roots represent karmas] – it seems we are 'in for it'! So how are we going to get out of it- Chitva- by cutting it at the tap root with the strong [drudhen] axe[shastra- weapon] of dispassion[asanghen]. The word for tree in Sanskrit is Vruksha- that which can be cut down- so this tree can be cut down by the strong axe of non-attachment!

Note: Tadatmanand- From the Vedantic standpoint: The Chaitanya Saakshi or Pure Consciousness or Purusha is not touched by any karma as it only serves to illumine the action. Who then. Is the Karta? The body is innocent as it only follows instructions, the mind we have said is also a part of the antahakarna- i.e. inner instrument – that leaves us only with the one who says, thinks and considers himself/herself as doer- i.e. the Ahankara or EGO. Karma accrues to that. Who then must seek and be free -is again the EGO. What is the cause of this deluded state? IGNORANCE. What is required to be done to get out of the

maze of Ignorance? A shastra [weapon which is gripped as opposed to astra- weapon which is thrown at] which is Drudha- Shankara defines the drudha shastra as: 1. *Punaha punaha vivek abhyasa ashma nishten-* meaning repeatedly sharpening it on a stone of vivek discrimination, and practice[abhyasa]. 2. *Paramatma abhimukha nishchaya drudhi kruten-* turning one's face towards Paramatma with a firm resolve. Hereby, emphasising the importance of reminding oneself constantly, of the distinction between the non-self and the Self, turning away from samsara and facing the Paramatma so as never to forget the goal- this automatically results in effortless dispassion which is the formidable axe of KNOWLEDGE to cut this humungous tree of IGNORANCE! [finally we are done with the tree says Tadatmananda!]

Shloka 4

ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं
यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।
तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये
यतः प्रवृत्तिः प्रसृता पुराणी ॥ 4 ॥

Thereafter the man should diligently seek that supreme state viz., God having attained which they no longer return to this world; and having fully resolved that he remains dedicated to that Primeval Being [God Narayan] Himself, from which the flow of this beginningless creation has progressed, he should dwell and meditate on Him.

Having cut the tree, the enlightened being does not return to this world. Where did this discovery be made? Within! The attitude should be prapadye- I seek refuge in Tam- aadyam – that Supreme Being Beginningless, from whom pravrutih- all activities prasruta- expanded since ancient times -puranni. Abide in that Supreme Being within.

Note on Shloka 5

Step 1- cut through the tree [sh.3]

Step 2. Seek refuge within – Supreme Being[sh.4]

Step 3. They reach the eternal vast ocean of love! Free from pride, delusion having conquered the defect of attachment, free from desire [once you feel

complete], always established in adhyatma [that which points to true Self- the inner divinity] and free from the duality known as sukha/dukkha! [Sh5]
Sh.6- note- the sun reveals all objects, but cannot reveal your consciousness which even illumines the sun! nor does fire light it up, and the moon itself is illumined by the sun.

Shloka 7

ममैवांशो जीवलोके जीवभूतः सनातनः ।

मनःषष्ठानीन्द्रियाणि प्रकृतिस्थानि कर्षति ॥ 7 ॥

The eternal Jivatma in this body is a fragment of My own Self; and it is that alone which draws around itself the mind and the five senses, which abide in Prakruti.

Shloka 8

शरीरं यदवाप्नोति यच्चाप्युत्क्रामतीश्वरः ।

गृहीत्वैतानि संयाति वायुर्गन्धानिवाशयात् ॥ 8 ॥

Even as the wind wafts scent from their seat, so, too, the Jivatma which is the controller of the body etc. taking the mind and the senses from the body which it leaves behind, forthwith migrates to the body which it acquires.

Swami Rama says the individual soul is a part of the Universal Self. Even as the breeze carries the fragrance from the flowers over which it passes and wafts it to another place- the soul as it is leaving the body, carries with it the sanskaras (conditionings) of this life to the next body, in which it continues to gratify the senses and experience the karmas of the past. The Jiva is likened to space in the pot, which when compared with the space outside seems like a part of the whole, it is however, the same space encased in a pot- body. The separation occurs because the ego refuses to see the whole and focuses only on itself. The yogi sees through all the levels, of separation and realises his oneness while still in the body and is then known as Jivan mukta.

Ekknath explains, there are three actors in this play of the Divine- The Self, the personality and Maya. The only one real is the Self. The other two, create the sense of a separate self and lead us into a subject /object relationship. Part of Maya's power comes from the fierce clamour of the senses. It leads into

nothing other than sorrow, with Sri Ramakrishna even Eknath prays, “may I never fall under the spell of Maya again.” As long as we identify with this body mind senses, we consider it real and a large gulf remains between the Self and the personality. As one spiritually progresses one experiences a large gulf between the physical world of the senses and the inner real world-this gulf is bridged after samadhi.

Sri Krishna says- in every little creature I exist. Thus, when we hurt a creature, we hurt Him. The Buddha has said we are what our thoughts are, the word he uses is Manomaya- filled with mind. Our growth or evolution thus lies in our own hands. This not only decides the situations we face, but even the body which we inherit- thus it’s propensity to disease, immune capacity, and susceptibility. Modern medicine only addresses the symptoms and physical manifestation of an illness it does not treat the cause. This is a science all by itself.

We respond to the world as we are and constantly reshape as we change. Our desires, likes and dislikes, form our sanskaras which we carry heavily from life to life. The way out is to live for others, reduce self-will to zero and the Lord will increase your mental and physical capacities manifold for the purpose.

We have known from experience how tendencies such as music, art, dramatics and the like- sometimes seem to arise de-novo in individuals. Science can always rely on genetics, but who selects the right genes? Is everything in the manifest world a random event? Even random events have probability outcomes. In fact, in Nature at the manifest level a set of laws, is in action always and cannot be manipulated. These laws govern the events in our life. What can be manipulated is our attitude, that then can change the outcome in future. This also is a law. If we remain vigilant, we do not have to fall into an auto pilot mode, and can polish our buddhi, to such an extent that the reflection of Consciousness is crystal clear. Attitude forms habit patterns, habit patterns form character and character forms destiny. This sequence is called sanskaras. At the time of death, the sanskaras that have been the perfume of life, are taken by the Jivatma, [is referred to as Ishvara here- meaning Lord of this body/mind prakruti] this then, determines the future birth.

It demands fructification by the law of karma. Our effort is to see through this and snap out of the spell. The winds of karma carries the subtle body into a new and suitable body.

Shankara: An integral portion of Myself of the Supreme Self, of Narayan, is the eternal Jiva (individual soul) in samsara, manifesting himself in everyone as the doer [karta] and enjoyer [bhokta]. He is like the sun reflected in water, the reflected sun is but a portion of the real sun and on removal of the water the reflected sun returns to the original sun and remains as that very sun. Or is like the akasha [sky] in a jar which is limited by the Upadhi of a jar. This akasha of the jar, is but a portion of the infinite akasha, and becomes one with the latter on destruction of the jar, which is the cause of limitation then it returns no more. Thus, the statement “to which having gone none returns.”

Shankara: [shloka 10] Him, who thus dwells in the body, the deluded, do not recognise, who leaves the body once acquired, who stays in the body, who perceives sound and other objects, who is always in association with the Gunas, i.e. whom all dispositions of mind such as pleasure, pain and delusion invariably accompany. They do not see Him, though in this way the Indweller comes quite within, the range of their vision. This is so because they are deluded in various ways, their minds being forcibly attracted to objects seen and unseen. Shankara says in Sanskrit: Aho kashtam varate iti anukroshati Bhagavan Cries- [O what a terrible turn of events these blockheads don't get it – even though the source of contentment is within they look out] Ah! Such is human perversity- thus does the Lord regret. But those whose wisdom eye, [nyana Chakshu- pramana janita -born of a means of a knowledge i.e. scriptures, proper teaching, proper teacher] has been opened by an authoritative source of knowledge i.e. who possess the power of discrimination, do recognise Him.

Sh. 11 The yogis who are striving to know That ray of light in atmani- within the heart, know It by Itself – Ayam aham asmi – I am this, Atma. But those who are akrutama- not prepared, achetasa, without right awareness, do not.

Shlokas 11- 15 discuss what this Radiance of Consciousness is which illumines the human mind and why it gets so easily missed, where It resides and what functions, It accomplishes. The light in the sun, moon and fire are all Him and illumined by Consciousness- Him. Life on earth is sustained by the soil in which

He dwells, as microbes which are His vital energy, the plant life is sustained by moonlight, which is known to affect the growth of seeds and improve crop.

Shloka 14

अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।

प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥ 14 ॥

Taking the form of fire, as Vaisvanara, lodged in the body of all creatures and united with the Praana and Apaana breaths, it is I who digest and assimilate the four kinds of food.

Ekknath

This particular discourse is usually recited prior to meals not only, because it is one of the shortest but particularly because this shloka, reminds one of what the mechanism of assimilation of nutrition is. Thereby, we become aware of the underlying Brahman in both the food, the eater and the enjoyer of it all. The verse Brahmarpanam brahmahavir... in discourse 4 sh 24, indeed expresses a similar Truth but here the Vedas are being quoted, and the fire of digestion is emphasised. This surely indicates how all knowing were our sages- today we know that the fieriest acid- Hydrochloric acid resides in our stomach to digest proteins and other food materials. If it is poured on to any surface it would burn it – and yet the stomach does not digest itself! Magic? That is Vaishvanara. Of course today, we know why this does not happen.

Samaayukta- connected with Prana and apana- the vital force. Pacchami- I cook, Annam Chaturvidham- four types of food. The four fold foods are: Bhojya- that which is chewed, the food has to be eaten by mastication, Bhakshya- that which is swallowed, choshya- that which is sucked, that which has to be eaten by devouring lehya- that which is licked.

Shankara: As the digestive fire in all living organisms Vaishvanara: the fire, abiding in the stomach as said in the Shruti: “This fire is Vaishvanara, which is within man and by which the food is digested.” [Bri.Up. 5-9-1]

He who regards that the eater is the Vaishvanara Fire, that the food eaten by Fire is the Soma [moon] and that, the two together thus, form Fire -Soma [Agni-Somau] is free from all taint of impurity in food.

This chapter is chanted before mealtimes, and each shloka can be meditated upon while contemplating on Ishvara's presence.

Shloka 15

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि सन्निविष्टो

मतः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च ।

वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्यो

वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् || 15||

*It is I who remain seated in the heart of all creatures as the controller of all;
and it is I who am the source of memory, knowledge and ratio-centric faculty.
Again, I am the only object worth knowing through the Vedas; I alone am the
origin of Vedanta and knower of the Vedas too.*

The presence of God has been shown in the 3 above shlokas- in the sun, moon and agni, then the soil and plants, and the fire of digestion and now Shri Krishna speaks of how He resides within our heart[mind]. The shift in meter shows its importance and draws one's attention to it immediately.

From Me comes, smruti- memory, Jnanam- knowledge and apohanam- loss of memory! [of who I am- so we are not to blame.] This is my take however, Shankara explains below in a different way.

I am the One to be known, and the source of all Vedanta and also the Knower [the Knowledge in the Vedas] as well.

Swami Rama explains the fire of life- Prana that enlivens human beings and the rest of the animate world- is the Lord supreme. He is both the Vedas and Vedanta, all the mind faculties- memory, ratio-centric capacity all arise from Him alone. It is important that we know that the source of all that is without and within is indeed just the One. The light of the stars, Sun and Moon, and the Light of Knowledge all have only one source and that is Him.

Shri Krishna is continuing the theme that He alone is the Prana in all existence. Einstein was looking for a unified field when he discovered that matter and energy are interchangeable- Shri Krishna is that unified field not only outside but within as well. This Prana or life energy gets dissipated through the senses which cause it to leak. Whenever desire grips us- Prana leaks out and vital

energy is lost. If we control the senses our will gets strengthened immeasurably. The following are the ways in which leaks occur- 1. When the mind is scattered and divided and pulled in different directions. 2. Conflict between right and wrong in our minds -a tussle goes on quite indefinitely. 3. Worry - over minor matters which tends to paralyse any action. 4. Depression because of non-acceptance- Eknath.

All these leaks can be fixed with right resolve and discipline.

The mind is likened to the Moon- lunar- lunatic- mana- manobal[strength of mind] - this is so because it reflects the light of the Self- and this is enough to illumine the manifest world. Imagine if the sun of the Self rose in this mind- what would happen? It would blow the mind away- that is what happens at enlightenment - so it is described. The Self is truly all there is but very cleverly masked by our minds. Shri Krishna is reminding us- who is it who enlightens the mind? In Kenopanishad the opening shloka is- Kena ishitam patati preshitam manah? By whose inspiration does the mind think- Bhagawan answers- It is Me alone. The senses are indeed as Eknathji says a source of leakage of this tremendous power and due to which we feel tired and unable to function off and on. This reminds me of a story from the book of Swami Rama- Living with the Himalayan Masters, wherein, one day Swami Rama approaches his master and complains, that the Master is not showering His Grace on him or else He would have advanced much faster, with less effort on the path. The Master asked Swami Rama to go get a vessel and 2 litres of milk. Swami Rama did that and was then told to pour the milk into the vessel, in the middle of which the Master had made a hole. As Swami Rama did that of course the milk was leaking and he questioned what all this was about? The Master told him- "I am pouring Grace on you all the time, but nothing stays for you have made holes in your mind - you let it wander, you let anger and desire come in and that has to be fixed first!"

Shankara: As the Self in the hearts {Buddhi} of all I dwell. Wherefore from Me, the Self of all sentient beings, are memory, knowledge, as well as their loss. Just as knowledge and memory occur in righteous persons as a result of their good deeds, [punyakarma], so as a result of their sins, loss of memory and knowledge occurs in the sinful. I the Supreme Self, am to be known in all Vedas. It is I who cause the teaching of the Vedanta {Upanishads} to be handed down

in regular succession, and it is I who know the Vedic Teaching. The Lord beyond the perishable and imperishable Universe.

From verse 12 to this one a summary has been given the glories of Narayan, the Blessed Lord, as manifested through superior Upadhis. Now, in the following verses, the Lord proceeds to determine the true nature of the same [Blessed Lord], who is pure and unlimited, being quite distinct from all perishable[kshara] and imperishable [akshar] upadhis.

First, then, the Lord arranges all that is taught in the preceding as well as in the succeeding discourses in three groups and says:

Shloka 16

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।

क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥ 16 ॥

The perishable and the imperishable too- these are the two kinds of Purushas in this world. Of these, the bodies of all beings are spoken of as perishable; while the Jivatma or the embodied soul is called imperishable.

Shloka 17

उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मैत्युदाहृतः ।

यो लोकत्रयमाविश्य बिभर्त्यव्यय ईश्वरः ॥ 17 ॥

Yet, the Supreme Person is other than these, who, having encompassed all the three worlds, upholds and maintains all, and has been spoken of as the imperishable Lord and the Supreme spirit.

Swami Rama: One must understand these two terms- kshara and Akshara which mean the perishable - comprising of the body, mind, breath and senses, and the imperishable that is the individual soul and the subconscious mind which stores memories, desires and impressions gained through life. The three units that define a human being are 1. The physical which is subject to growth, disease, decay and death, this includes the conscious mind. 2. The Semi mortal which is the subconscious mind and the Jiva- or the individual bound to these desires, semi-mortal. 3. The Supreme Self which also dwells in the heart of each individual and was never bound and is imperishable, immutable, source of the first two. It supports all. When the first unit separates from the second unit at the time of death - the second unit which is the unconscious mind + individual

soul continue to exist. The journey that one follows in this world should be an internal one from the gross to the subtle and ultimately to the Self.

Eknath: Shloka 16: there are two aspects- the perishable and the imperishable in this world. The perishable includes even our biosphere- land, air, water, which we seem to forget in our avarice to dominate the planet. The great economist Schumacher in his book 'Small is beautiful' explains how this Spaceship Earth is an enormous firm and we seem to be living off the capital which is limited, which no economist would appreciate. Here we have our friend Rajas at work- does not care what happens to others, what happens tomorrow- wants just to acquire. Acquire, acquire now.

Shloka 17: Eknathji says that this is the chapter on the Supreme Being- Purushottama and here Shri Krishna is defining the imperishable divinity that He is. Eknathji goes on to say that unless we have a purpose, events cannot make sense to us. Materialists have given acquisition of wealth as a goal - but this scarcely ever brings happiness. In the attempt to make money- arms, drugs and many other harmful, self-destructive substances are sold and bought. Today sportspersons, actors and the like have become idols and that is leading mankind to disaster. If we kept Jesus or the Buddha as our ideals and our purpose in life we would never go astray and always strive to be compassionate and spread happiness. To truly feel another's pain, requires identification with the sufferer and only then can one take every measure to alleviate that suffering.

Swami Rama's explanation of the mortal, semi mortal and immortal parts of a human being clearly identifies the way to liberation. We are bound because of our identification with these bodies- sthool- gross, Sukshma- subtle, and karana- causal bodies. At the moment of death the sthool sharir separates from the other two, which then continue to exist and because of the unfulfilled desires it searches for another sthool sharir sure to be born in this dimension. Thus, we are bound due to identifying with the bodies in sequence- for Shri Krishna has said that even at the moment of death we can merge into Him.

When Shri Krishna describes- the Purushottama the imperishable one who is the source and support of all- Shri Krishna places THE IDEAL before us. So that, we may strive and attain Him. In fact, I had therefore sent a questioner to all

my classmates titled 'At 70' just to determine what is the purpose of our life and how far have we come to attain it. Perhaps, it is not for us to judge or expect the fruit thereof, but it is our privilege to have the goal in sight and work towards it. The ultimate goal becomes an all-consuming desire and inspires every thought, word and action as we step even one foot on it. At every age, event, the attitude of mind is then, steeped into walking the path. When one does not have this goal at heart we wander from one pleasure seeking, to another like a rudderless boat being tossed on the waves, of this sansaric ocean with no shore in sight. May all beings attain the Ultimate!

Shankara: In samsara, there are two categories of beings, we see, arranged in two separate groups, spoken of as the perishable [Kshara] and the other [akshara] Purushas.

The first group consists of the perishable [kshara] which is the unenlightened human being.

The second – Akshara – Imperishable contrary to the first is Maya Shakti, the illusory power of the Lord, the germ from which the perishable being, takes its birth, the seat of all the latent impressions [sanskaras] of desires [kama], actions[karma] etc. pertaining to the numerous mortal creatures.

As to what the two beings [Purushas] comprise, the Lord Himself says: The perishable [kshara] comprises the whole Universe of changing forms the imperishable [akshara] is what is known as the immutable – Kuta{anvil – which is unchanging} stha [abides in] is understood as unchanging, the Maya Shakti or creative power, for It abides there. That which abides in various forms of illusion and deception. As the seed of samsara is endless, and it is said to be imperishable.

Distinct from these two, the perishable and the imperishable and untainted by the evils of the two Upadhis of perishable and imperishable, eternal, pure, intelligent and free by Nature is the Highest Spirit – Purshottama. He is the Supreme Self bibharti- supports all.

He is the Supreme as compared with the other selves set up by Avidya, such as the physical body and He is the Self, constituting the unfailing Inner Consciousness of all beings. He is therefore, known as the Supreme Self in the

Vedantas. The highest Spirit is further specified thus- He is the Eternal Omniscient Lord, Narayana, who penetrates by His vital Energy [Bala- Shakti] the three worlds, the earth [Bhuhu], the mid region [Bhuvaha] and heaven [suvaha] by His mere existence in them.

Purushottama – the Highest Spirit, is a well-known name of the Lord described above. From the picture on page 352 a new insight was gained: The reflected sun is the Jiva [the Lord within us for there can be no reflection without a source]. The Sun is Ishvara the Akshara Brahman and Purshottama is beyond both and the source of both.

Shloka 20

इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रमिदमुक्तं मयानघ ।

एतद्बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान्स्यात्कृतकृत्यश्च भारत ॥ 20 ॥

Arjuna, this most exotic teaching has thus been imparted by Me; grasping it in essence man becomes wise and his mission in life is accomplished.

Guhyatama- means the greatest secret that which is right here in your experience you do not recognise due to ignorance- this knowledge is given in this discourse. Kruta krutyaha- the one for whom all that needs to be done is done.

Shankara: Though the whole of the Gita is called Science [shastra], yet from the context it appears that the fifteenth discourse is here spoken of as science, for the purpose of extolling it. In fact, the whole teaching of the Gita Shastra has been summed up in this discourse. Not the teaching of Gita Shastra only but the whole teaching of the Veda is here embodied, and it is said: he who knows It [the Ashwattha] knows the Veda and that It is I who am to be known by all the Vedas. On knowing this science as taught above but not otherwise, a man becomes wise. He has accomplished all duties.

Whatever duty a Brahmana of superior birth has to do, all that duty has been done when the real Truth about the Lord is known, that is to say, by no other means can a man's duty have been accomplished. And it has been said "All actions, without exception O son of Prithaa are comprehended in wisdom," saying of Manu.

This is the fulfilment of the birth, especially for a brahmana for, by attaining to this does the twice born become the accomplisher of all duties, and not otherwise."

Since you have heard from Me this truth about the Supreme Being, you are a happy man, O Bharata.

Summary: *To start with we learn in this discourse the enigmatic description of this Sansara as the Ashwatha tree with the tap root in the Unmanifest and the aerial roots and leaves facing downwards. The only way to destroy this Indestructible tree is through Vairagya -non-attachment. It is called Indestructible although it is that which does not [A] stay [stha] tomorrow [shva], because it is a continuous flow -pravaaha- from the source avyakta the unmanifest. First Shri Krishna tells us how the Jivatma leaves this physical body at the time of death, and that verily the Jivatman is He alone. Shri Krishna explains the process of digestion and the jatharagni [fire] required as a manifestation of Him. He then talks about the most touching aspect of this discourse- how He dwells in the heart of each and every one, this is experienced by the wise and they have the memory of who they are but the sinful ones forget and are lost in samsara. Shri Krishna then begins to explain what Purushottama is. Next, He tells us how there are two Purushas the kshara and akshara. The akshara is so defined because of Maya Shakti which is indestructible and gives birth to this universe perpetually. The kshara Purusha is the physical body. Shri Krishna is above and beyond both and is therefore known as Purshottama. The one who recognizes this is wise and has attained what needs to be attained and accomplished the goal of life.*

Expressed as:

Krutakrutya- done what needs to be done

Praptavyaprapta- attained what needs to be attained

Jnana jnatavya- known to be known

Reflection and Exercises:

1. What does the Ashwatha tree represent?
2. With what can you uproot it?
3. What takes birth again and again?
4. Who is Vaishvanara?
5. What is understood by hrudi sannithistho- discuss shloka 15.
6. Who is Purshottama?
7. Kindly explain Ashwatha tree in Vedanta. Summarise the discourse.

**Discourse 16 - Daivaasur sampadi vibhaga
yoga - The Yoga of division between the
Divine and the demoniacal properties.**

In this discourse Shri Krishna continues to expand on the qualities of the demoniacal and divine beings as indicated in discourse 9, so as to clarify the prerequisites necessary to a pure mind capable of reflecting the Truth within, and conducive to liberation. Primarily, Shri Krishna gives us the divine qualities and then emphasizes the demoniacal ones. Shri Krishna reassures Arjuna, that he has divine qualities and so need not fear! I was listening, within my heart and heard Shri Krishna reassure us all as well. Yet we should know in detail all the demoniacal qualities so as to avoid them scrupulously.

As we can see these last six discourses synthesizes the That and the Thou. We are learning more about how Thou should be to be That in this discourse. That which belongs to the Devas is Daivi and that which belongs to Asuras is Asuri, Sampadi, means something which we have collected, Vibhaga- division and yoga is the discourse. This discourse deals with the division of the Daivi and Asura traits. Or as Swami Dayanand said, “The discourse of the traits of the wise and that of the otherwise!” Thus the “adhikaritam” which needs to be developed.

Shloka1

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।

दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥ 1 ॥

Absolute fearlessness, perfect purity of mind, constant fixity in the yoga of meditation for the sake of Self Realisation, and even so , charity in its Satvica form, control of the senses, worship of God and other Deities as well as one’s elders, including the performance of Agnihota [pouring oblations into the sacred fire]and other sacred duties, study and teaching of Vedas and other sacred books as well as the chanting of God’s names and glories, suffering hardships for the discharge of one’s sacred obligations and uprightness of mind as well as the body and senses.

Shloka2

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।

दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् ॥ 2 ॥

*Non-violence in thought, word and deed, truthfulness and geniality of speech
absence of anger even on provocation, disclaiming doership in respect of
actions, quietude or composure of mind, abstaining from slander compassion
towards all creatures, absence of attachment to the objects of senses even
during their contact with the senses, mildness, presence of shame in
transgressing the scriptures or social convention, and abstaining from
frivolous pursuits;*

Shloka 3

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहोनातिमानिता ।

भवन्ति सम्पदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥ ३॥

*Sublimity, forgiveness, fortitude, external purity, bearing enmity to none and
absence of self- esteem - these are, O Arjuna, the marks of him who is born
with the divine endowments.*

Both Swami Rama and Eknathji have taken 1-3 shlokas together

Swami Rama: A sadhaka needs to develop all divine qualities to travel speedily on the path. In fact, they are like a prerequisite. The path then becomes easy to traverse. Preparation is most important for the fire to light- one has to collect the twigs of random thoughts, desires and emotion which dissipate one's energy and rob one of the dignity, courage, willpower, strength and love so essential to make progress. Consistency in pursuing the inner journey is another important quality necessary. The aspirant must bring these qualities into daily life through both speech and action. Ahimsa helps one to express his love for his fellow creatures and giving up all selfish desires- anger and agitation disappear leading to realisation of Truth.

Eknath: There are two paths one that leads upwards to abiding joy and one that leads downwards to sorrow. It is for us to choose. The path that leads downwards is characterised by grabbing, competition, and rising up the social order irrespective of the means one has to adopt. This will lead to ecological and other social disasters but the man who chooses to walk this way is unconcerned. Misery and sorrow is the destiny of such a choice.

On the other hand, one could follow the path of giving selflessly and working for the upliftment of humanity as a whole. Here Eknath cites the example of

Mother Teresa and the moment she was in Oslo to receive the Nobel prize. He recalls her life and the immense self-sacrifice that epitomised her leading to such radiance and kindness in those eyes that all wanted to be near her. She refused the banquet which would have been given in her honour and asked that the money be donated for the welfare of the poor. If one chose such a path realisation of Truth would not be far.

It is quite tragic in my experience that we are not taught the purpose of life in our impressionable age. We are taught that we should not tell lies, get angry, hurt others, cheat etc. but to what purpose? Most of the time as we grow up we see that those who are thriving are doing just the opposite! No wonder we are bewildered and confused as to which path to follow. Both the divine qualities and the demoniacal qualities have been explained here clearly by Shri Krishna, so that we may follow, inculcate, and develop the divine qualities which help us towards Self-realisation. It is not meant for self-aggrandisement- that people should talk about what a humble, good or kind person I am that I do what I do- but I try to remove the demoniacal qualities and imbibe the divine so that within myself I discover- peace and joy which is perennial. Someone has to tell us again and again, where the habit of speaking the truth, being kind and honest leads- how it helps in a disciplined life and thereby enables us to reach the Truth within. We must know this from childhood, for it is here that habits form and that builds our character and destiny. There are ample cases in history, where even though the person knows what is good and virtuous he is unable to help himself, choosing the evil path as if perforce of habit eg. Duryodhan, Ravana.

Note: Shankara: sattva samshuddhihi refers to the mind totally purified because mind is sattvaguna pradhana, the body is tamoguna pradhana and prana is rajoguna pradhana. The purification of the mind refers to removal of all mental qualities that bring the mind down and bind it.

Jnana which is shastraha acharyataha cha atmaadipadharthanaam avagamaha- knowledge of one's true self gained from the scriptures and the Guru, vyavasthithi is being established. Yoga-avagatanaam indriyadi upasanharen ekagrataya svatmasamvedyata abharanam yogaha- [jnana to be assimilated is yoga] sense restraining and concentrating one's mind in meditation it becomes assimilated [meditation is not optional at all].

Arjavam- ruju bhaava- straight like a rope- thought, word and deed in alignment- conflict free mind.

Satyam bruyaat, priyam bruyaat, hitam bruyaat- Vaak tapas. [austerity of speech-speak the truth, pleasant, and conducive to well-being]

Qualify each quality, to recognise their subtler aspects.

Kshama- is patience defined by Shankara as- aakrushtasya taaritasyavaa antarvikriyah anutpattihi- absence of disturbance in the mind[antarvikriya] even if one is hit, and should the disturbance occur one should quell the disturbance, utpanayaam vikriyaam upashanam akrodaha.

Shloka 4:

दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च ।

अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य पार्थ सम्पदमासुरीम् ॥ ४ ॥

Hypocrisy, arrogance, pride, anger, sternest, and ignorance too - these are the marks of him who is born with demonic properties.

Swami Rama: Destiny is the result of one's own actions; the song you sing is composed by you alone. The world you see is your own creation. If the path of anger, hypocrisy, jealousy and arrogance is followed- then only darkness, misery and loneliness is the destiny. Yoga is a science by which transformation can happen. Modern psychology may be able to define the causes of one's mental ill health but as yet does not help in transforming oneself. Only yoga psychology systematically through body, mind and breath control can bring about a transformation in character and thereby one's destiny.

Ekknath: Every spiritual teacher at some point has to explain these two routes leading to and away from the Truth. In Sanskrit the word Daivi- is used for the divine qualities which means God like. The word also means light, shine or radiance- this is the way to divinity. The Asuri qualities all arise from self-will so much so that they can lead to ecological suicide, wars, terrorism and cruelty on a global scale- all of this arises in the minds of men. No one is born an out and out incorrigible devil, because the Atman dwells in all. However, ignoring the call of the Atman, the mind can lead man to his own destruction on this physical, emotional and psychological level. For example, stacking things even nonessentials in times of national calamities indicates a demonic tendency and lead to disaster. In contrast, if one could grow the essentials and distribute

them, or lessen one's own needs it would lead to the welfare of all and the shining divinity in oneself.

The asuri qualities can be recognised only because we have an element of that quality in us. We cannot recognise that which we do not know. The same is true of the daivi qualities. All of these qualities are a play of the gunas and the false identification with the body mind complex. The daivi as well as the Asuri are a cause of bondage one with gold chains and the other with iron chains. To be liberated one has to break free of the chains altogether - this is possible only when we become gunateet- beyond the gunas, by being who we truly are. It is also a fact that both these natures abide in each of us in varied proportions at different times and seem to manifest when the conditions are conducive. Vigilance is the key and scrupulous avoidance of the Asuri Prakruti should be assiduously practiced.

Shankara: Abhijaatsya – born with but we also know that with proper guidance a sinner can be transformed into a saint and therefore – nature is half the answer, and the other half is nurture.

Dumbha- is hypocrisy, [dharmadhvajitvam]- the hypocrisy of a person who shows he is holy and pious and within is exactly the opposite. Darbha- arrogance. Paarushyam means harshness- purushabhaavasya- excess male traits.

From here on Shri Krishna describes the Asuri Prakruti in its various shades and colours and also the destination such a life warrants. Swami Tadatmanand likens this detailed description of Asuri traits to the emphasis given to the study of diseases in Med School, without which one cannot come to the right diagnosis and therefore treatment. At the same time, he warns “don't start imagining you have the Asuri trait, like the medical student who starts to imagine he has the disease!” The mental traits that lead us off the path of dharma and onto the path of adharma are clearly and elaborately explained. The attitude being like that of the Charvak philosophy propounded by Brihaspati which is today's materialism. That all there is, is this world meant to be enjoyed, summed up in Sanskrit as Rinam Kritva gruham pibet, yavan jivet sukham jivet- incur debt and drink ghee live happily as long as you live for in the end you will turn to ashes] That is eat drink and be merry! These beings of demoniacal tendency have a two-fold theory 1.All there is, is this world to be

enjoyed, and 2. There are no consequences of one's action. Caught up in a web of ignorance.

Shloka 21:

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।

कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥ 21॥

Desire, anger and greed these triple gates of hell bring about the downfall of the soul, therefore one should shun all these three.

Swami Rama: Those who run after the objects of this world and sense gratification strive all their life, to accumulate and protect their acquisitions. They are afraid of death and have a difficult time facing old age. To them the fulfilment of desire, is of prime importance and when they find, it is not possible, they become angry. Their tendency to grab is ceaseless, these then are sanskaras, which they carry into the next lifetime. Not being content they are hankering and miserable through life, then how can they be happy hereafter? They try to do some charity here and there hoping for benefits of some kind but that is of no avail, for desire, greed and anger have carved a gateway to hell for them.

Eknath: Our mind is like a large train junction where thoughts and emotions keep coming and going, with minor distractions of irritation, desire kindled by news, or advertisements for relationships. There are however three major trains - Anger / Lust / and Greed, strangely enough they all lead to the same destination which is most definitely not heaven.

Disney world is a great tourist attraction with all kinds of scary make belief rides, one need not go in there, these are all present within our very mind. Fuelled by newspapers and advertisements through television/ and every other media, the material view of life is broadcast in such a bold manner, as to make all believe, it is the only viewpoint worth having. Thus desire- lust even among women, and anger in the form of fury, irritation, righteous indignation, as well as greed to have, have and have - are fanned to dizzying levels and considered a norm. Where every action is assessed in terms of the money it generates, and not on the skill it requires to perform -the benchmark of success has changed to a pathetically low level. And while all this creates craving it also leads to a state of chronic frustration, which is not to be socially admitted of

course. All of this can lead only to one destination the major train for this should be termed- the age of rage- anger forming the biggest track. One need not die to reach hell- it is here and now in the pursuit of pleasure, through greed lust and anger.

The way out is meditation and constant vigilance of the thoughts that appear and disappear in the field of our mind. The alertness and vigilance should be such that even the unconscious is tapped and even in our dreams anger is eradicated. Finally, all gates to hell are closed and weeds grow over them, and we know not of their existence in our psyche.

Anger is by far the biggest gateway to hell. Like Shri Goenkaji says - people curse others saying -“saat janam tak maaf nahee karunga! arey kise shap they rahe ho?” [I will not forgive for 7 births! Hello? Who are you cursing?]” Anger first burns the heart of the one who is angry before it creates any disturbance in another. Anger has several forms from mild irritation, to resentment, to fury to violence. And as Eknathji has said even self-righteousness is a form of anger. Now one would then argue- that it would not be humanly possible to avoid anger altogether but then as we have seen in this discourse, we have to develop forgiveness (Kshama, according to Shankara is unaffectedness when reviled or beaten) to overcome anger in any form. When we actually start practicing we can clearly see that the antidote to anger is forgiveness- therefore it is said- ‘to err is human to forgive divine,’ if it is our aim to be divine, that is what we need to practice. With regard to desire as in lust, kaam - it is worth reminding oneself of the fleeting nature of gratification, with no lasting contentment or fulfilment, it is also worth noting the consequences, that indiscriminate indulgences often lead to. It is undoubtedly true that we fall victim to every kind of advertisement and every ad is in fact, trying to sell something we do not need, making it seem impossible for us to live without the same. Most of the younger generation lives on a show of possession by using the EMI bait. The adage ‘cut your coat according to your pocket’ has long since disappeared into oblivion. That is greed- it was not a philosopher, who observed when asked the cause of the 2008 stock market crash - who said- Greed!

Shloka 24:

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।

ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥ 24 ॥

Therefore, the scripture alone is your guide in determining what should be done and what should not be done. Knowing this you ought to perform only such action as is ordained by the scriptures.

Swami Rama: The aspirant would do well to take the authority of the scriptures as his guide. Ancients who have walked the path have accurately recorded their experiences and it is prudent to check one's own experiences, particularly, on the spiritual path to verify whether these are in fact spiritual or hallucinatory. In the modern age there are teachers who perform so called miracles to gather a huge following, one should be wary of such Gurus. Even here the best guides are the scriptures where every definition is available to discriminate between the pseudo and the true Guru.

Ekknath: **The Bhagvad Gita is not a book of commandments but a book for choices.** It is as relevant today as it was 3 millennia ago. The scholarly rendering sometimes misguides regarding what is enjoined in the scriptures. It is not about rituals and religion - it is a choice given and a direction as to what kind of behaviour leads where. Just as when one goes on an adventure - one is cautioned and warned against certain behaviour, here, we are told to refer to the scriptures as a guide.

Often times we are in a dilemma about right action and sometimes we stand paralysed in indecision as to the path we should follow. The best guide is the scripture, not only regarding the rituals one should perform but the attitude one should adopt. This is so because the scripture is not personally concerned in impressing you or wooing you to its belief system- it simply gives you the choice to follow informing you what action leads where. Nothing can guide us better, when we follow our Guru even if we do not find confirmation of the scriptures, in their right thought, speech, action and behaviour. For this however, we should be following a true Guru and not a pseudo one, and then one should have implicit faith. Shri Krishna's all-embracing teaching lights our path at every step, and if within our heart we decide and establish Him as the Guru we can most simply follow Him.

The Ashtanga Patanjali Yoga begins with 'Yama and Niyama'- the rules and regulations of life and if we live by them, we can surely by-pass the gateway to hell and find ourselves at the gate to heaven, our true nature, which shall become evident in a sattvic mind.

Summary: *Shri Krishna clearly describes the Divine and Demoniactal Natures. Shri Krishna begins with the divine qualities which need to be developed for Adhikaritam. Shri Krishna then goes on elaborately explaining the basis of the Asuric mindset- they act like the Charvaak philosophy, accumulate wealth at any cost. Desire being the root, and in trying to satiate them they keep fuelling the fire [anala- meaning fire where there is never alam i.e. enough, adding fuel to fire can never put it off!] for desire sees no end until death [pralayam- RIP]. This is important as it serves as a guide, to a righteous life and Shri Krishna, also directs us to follow the scriptural authority, in case of doubt which will ensure that we take the right path.*

Reflection and Exercises:

1. What are divine qualities? Which is your favourite and why?
2. What are demoniactal qualities? Why is it necessary for us to know the distinction between them? Which is the one you have and how will you get rid of it?
3. Who is a true Guru?
4. What in your experience are the key practices to smoothen the not so good grooves made by habit patterns in your mind?
5. How many questions has Arjuna asked in the Bhagavad Gita?
6. Summarise the discourse.

**Discourse 17 - Shraddhatraya vibhag
yoga, the yoga of the Division of the
Threefold Faith.**

Now Arjuna's curiosity is aroused after hearing what happens to the demoniacal [totally materialistic] beings, what different fate awaits them, he wants to know what happens to those who have faith but do not know or follow the injunctions given in the scriptures? Does their faith belong to the Sattva, Raja or Tamoguna? Shri Krishna has also concluded the last discourse by saying one should follow, the scriptural injunctions to know what should be done and what should not be done. Such a general question, cannot be answered without a reference to the several particular aspects of it, the blessed Lord first of all categorises faith into three depending on the prominent Guna. Shri Krishna then explains the type of food, worship, charity and austerity which also get categorised into three depending on their characteristics. Finally, the blessed Lord instructs how all of these- food, worship, actions, austerities, charity can be perfected and the significance of Om Tat Sat. To me this penultimate discourse has been a personal revelation as awestruck, I researched Om and the beauty of Tat Sat hit home.

Shloka 1

अर्जुन उवाच ।

ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः ।

तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः ॥ १॥

Arjuna said: Those, endowed with faith, who worship gods and others, disregarding the injunctions of the scriptures, where do they stand, Krishna,- in Sattva, Rajas or Tamas

Shloka 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

त्रिविधा भवति श्रद्धा देहिनां सा स्वभावजा ।

सात्त्विकी राजसी चैव तामसी चेति तां शृणु ॥ २॥

Shri Bhagvan said: That untutored innate faith of men is three kinds- satvika, Rajasika and Tamasika. Hear of it from Me.

Shloka 3

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत ।

श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥ ३ ॥

The faith of all men conforms to their mental disposition Arjuna. Faith constitutes a man; whatever the nature of his faith verily he is that.

Swami Rama: Shraddha means conviction. Arjuna wants to know what type of shraddha is possessed by those who do not follow the injunctions of the scriptures but perform sacrifices with full faith. Sri Krishna explains that the tendencies and type of shraddha man has, comes with him through sanskaras of the past. The Guna that is predominant- sattva / rajas / or tamas determines his actions and function, and that is his nature. The one with a sattvic nature devotes his energy in doing good to others and the one with rajas nature devotes his time and energy to fulfilling his desires, the one with tamasic nature has desires but out of sheer indolence and laziness does not make any effort. Similarly, with the sacrifices[yajnya], the sattvic one does according to the injunctions of the scriptures and for the wellbeing of all, the one with a rajas nature performs sacrifices for his own benefit to appease the gods for material gratification and the tamasic one worships with superstitions only.

Eknath: Even a little child has shraddha. If one has right shraddha he does right if wrong he does wrong, verily it is shraddha that defines man. The greatest glory in the world is that man can alter his Shraddha, from the meanest to the noblest.

We may have read many books and listened to many great scholars but unless that knowledge becomes one's shraddha, it will only result in intellectual importance. Thus, when we see these great people in their daily life we are disappointed in their action. The individual Shraddha is one aspect of life and then there is the communal, national and world shraddha, which is what is frightening today. The shraddha that life is purely physical is led by Rajas and it does not rest ever. Rajas drives man to get more and more and faster and faster, there is no limit to want on an urgent basis too. There is an adage given by the Romans- 'if you want peace prepare for war' What can be more contradictory than this? The sad situation we find ourselves in is due to wrong shraddha. We apply this to every aspect, whether it is fuel or arms race or eco-destruction, or global warming: we are only bothered to get, get, and that too now, now no

matter the consequences tomorrow. It reminds one of a lemming (a rodent) who is hell bent to rush into the sea to drown - this is what we are doing and the faster the better. If we did not have shraddha in the paper money we could buy nothing, the bank system could collapse and thus we see shraddha can be blind, heedless and persistent. It is only people like St. Francis, St. Teresa and Mahatma Gandhi who have shown in action, what shraddha in love and wisdom lie inherent in human potential. We need to change our shraddha.

Shraddha is a powerful word - it conveys a resolute faith, conviction born from experience and this determines the nature and character of a person. Each of us has an inherent faith which has become our second nature because it seemed to work for us in the past- in achieving our end. For example- my own conditioning and conviction has been that 'lato ke bhut baato se nahee mante' [people who need a kick do not listen to words]and it has worked for my personal gain almost always. This is a typically rajas attitude and shraddha which in experience has paid off in the past, would do so in the future because that is my belief. If however, I changed my goal and made it sattvic I would have to change my shraddha also, to a sattvic one of kindness and gentleness towards all beings, of course I would then not get the fruit of self-gratification, and I must learn to accept that. If Self-realisation is indeed my goal, I must be sincere in making every effort which might seem unpleasant to start with and change my shraddha to a sattvic one. This is truly a practical application.

Shraddha has been mentioned in the Bhagvad Gita several times discourse 4- sh. 39 – shraddhavaan labhate jnanam... i.e. how important Shraddha is. Shri Krishna mentions it again in discourse 7- sh 21, 22- those who worship demigods for material goals eventually are worshipping the Lord although in a mistaken way.

Shankara: The faith of each is according to his, Nature and may be Sattvic, Rajasic or Tamasic, for each has his own sanskaras, accordingly that, they worship the corresponding gods as well. The Sattvic worship the Devas such as Vasus, the Rajasic yakshas such as Kubera and the Rakshasas such as Nairita, and the Tamasic the Bhutas and pretas. [it was believed that the Brahmins who did not follow the right conduct become pretas who grant boons]. Only one in a thousand has Sattvic tendency and worships the Devas.

There is a three-fold description of every activity such as food, worship, giving daan [charity] and doing austerity. Food conducive to longevity, fresh and succulent is sattvic, pungent and spicy, dry and very hot is rajasic and stale, putrid half cooked is tamasic. It will be noted if one experimented with different foods that the mind is also influenced by the type ingested, hence all the instructions given in this regard, are ultimately meant for a quiet and steady mind such that sadhana may be undertaken without any impediment. Worship is said to be Sattvic when done without motive much like nishkaam karma, again when it is done yashtavyam eva iti- it is done because it is to be done, for the sake of [lokasangrahaartham]- the wellbeing of all and out of gratitude. Worship is rajasic when done for material gain, for showing one's wealth and piety etc. It is tamasic when done without scriptural injunctions, without payment to the priests or charity and for unmentionable reasons. Charity can also similarly be classified. It is worth mentioning from Shankara's commentary about austerity, that it should be at all the three levels- in thought speech and deed. The qualifications in austerity of speech are as follows – it should not cause excitement [pain], it should be true, it should be beneficial and pleasant. All of these must necessarily be present for one said to be austere in speech. Of note is also the type of Daan- it would be sattvic when anonymous the message of this discourse is to help us develop the right attitude. We now come to - how to perfect defective acts.

Shloka 23

ॐ तत्सदिति निर्देशो ब्रह्मणस्त्रिविधः स्मृतः ।

ब्राह्मणास्तेन वेदाश्च यज्ञाश्च विहिताः पुरा ॥ 23 ॥

Om, Tat and Sat - this has been declared as the triple appellation of Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss. By that were the Brahmanas and the Vedas as well as sacrifices created at the cosmic dawn.

Shloka 24

तस्माद् ॐ इत्युदाहृत्य यज्ञदानतपःक्रियाः ।

प्रवर्तन्ते विधानोक्ताः सततं ब्रह्मवादिनाम् ॥ 24 ॥

Therefore, acts of sacrifice, charity and austerity, as enjoined by sacred precepts, are always commenced by noble persons, used to the recitation of Vedic chants, with the invocation of the divine name Om.

Shloka 25

दित्यनभिसन्धाय फलं यज्ञतपःक्रियाः ।

दानक्रियाश्च विविधाः क्रियन्ते मोक्षकाङ्क्षिभिः ॥ 25 ॥

With the idea that all this belongs to God, who is denoted by the appellation Tat, acts of sacrifice and austerity as well as charity of various kinds, are performed by the seekers of liberation, expecting no return for them.

Shloka 26

सद्भावे साधुभावे च सदित्येतत्प्रयुज्यते ।

प्रशस्ते कर्मणि तथा सच्छब्दः पार्थ युज्यते ॥ 26 ॥

The name of God, Sat, is used in the sense of reality and goodness and the word sat is also used in the sense of a praiseworthy, auspicious action, Arjuna.

Swami Rama: Has taken all above shlokas together and explains as follows: A yogi who has clearly understood the sattvic path and that is his very nature constantly worships the Lord in his thought, speech and action. For him there is nothing more attractive than to live immersed in the Lord. Whenever, such a one performs any action he utters three words- Om tat sat! These three words have a profound meaning. Om is the cosmic sound representing the Lord Himself. Ordinarily man experiences three states of consciousness- the waking, dream and deep sleep state, but the yogi is in the fourth state known as Turiya which is through and beyond these three states. This, state is also called the silent state - that of Om. Any good action is referred to as tat sat! It is well to remember these words- for Tat signifies that which exists without the support of any other and Sat that which is reality, other than which nothing exists. Thus the goal of his life is ever before him - the Lord the Truth and nothing but the truth - all that is auspicious.

Eknath: Has also taken all shlokas together. He explains- Om is the Mantram. Tat literally means that and signifies That which is real, unchanging, everlasting. Sat means Truth, Gandhiji defined God as Truth. Eknath quotes Mahatma Gandhi and says that evil persists only because we support it. Amid all the changing there is the unchanging, amidst darkness there is light amidst evil good persists and that is the proof of an underlying Power which creates, sustains and destroys all manifestation, and recreates it. That power is God.

All the above shlokas had a profound impact upon me as I reflected on the gravity of what Sri Krishna indicates. When I was a child, we often heard elders say Hari Om Tat Sat and at the time, I did not comprehend the significance. Now I realise, what a profound reminder these words are- first the primordial sound- Om which invokes the divine. Then the word Tat which signifies That - the source of creation and the one immutable timeless Brahman - so indeed the whole of creation belongs only to the Tat principle that alone is. Nothing is separate from Tat. Finally Sat- is existence the element of Truth and existence which forever abides. So, reminding oneself again and again of these three aspects, of the same Truth helps us in gaining a vantage point in our antahkaran, such that fear can have no grip. After all what can be taken away from whom? He is All in All. This fills me with a sense of total surrender and great contentment. Somewhat like saying by the Will of God or like saying, God willing- but somehow much more profoundly *stirring*.

Notes from Swami Tadatmanad:

Sh. 23: Om tat Sat [Om- That is the Truth] nirdesha – instruction about Brahman is the TRUTH implying all else is untrue-mithya. This instruction is trividha- threefold about Brahman. By these instructions – Braahamanas = that is part of the Vedas which give the ritual instructions. Every Veda is divided into four parts- Samhita- Hymns, Braahmanas- instructions given for ritulas, Aranyakas- meditations, and the Upanishads. Brahman as a neuter noun it means the substratum of all, as a masculine noun it means the Creator. Braahmana- is one who knows Brahman and it commonly means one who belongs to the Brahmin caste. Nirdesha means etymologically- that which is indicated i.e. like a designation. The insight is that Om Tat Sat indicates or designates or is a name for Brahman. [given in a sub-commentary on Shankara's commentary by Anandgiri]. Each is an individual name for Brahman- Taitreya Upanishad- Om iti Brahma, then from the Chandogya Upanishad- Tat tvam Asi- Tat stands for Brahman, Sat- Sadeva Soumya idam agra aasit also from Chandogya Upanishad [Before anything came into manifestation was sat eva- Brahman alone] Thus Sat also is a name for Brahman. So, Om Tat Sat most often conveys a sentence meaning Om- Brahman is that - Tat is Truth- Sat. At the end of each chapter is Om tat sat. That Brahman is Real- Truth and each word also means Brahman.

Sh. 24: Om iti udahrutya- uttering the syllable Om Tat Sat. First importance of Om- yajnya, daan, tapah – these actions pravartante – undertaken according to the scriptural mandates ordained– Vidhana- uktaha.

Om Tat Sat is a way of concluding any activity Pujya Swami Dayanand gave a practical suggestion – use Om Tat Sat at the end of an argument [which is never won or lost] and the tape recorder in the mind which keeps going on and on- use this technique – and put an end to it by simply saying Om Tat Sat! end of that. Once it is associated with the end of any subject the context works. How to turn the mind off? Use this switch! Tell the mind to shut up! And turn the attention to something else. So the three fold meaning of Om Tat Sat is 1. As a sentence at the end of every ritual. 2. As a name of Brahman. 3. As a Prayashchita mantra- to beg forgiveness of any inadequacy in the ritual or our attitude with which we have done it.

Sh. 25 – phalam anabhiisandhaya- without the desire of attaining any result. But we just said that we ask for forgiveness for any inadequacy – so result was in mind. Karma yoga- no intelligent person will do an act without expecting any result- so what then should the action be like without motivation for the result -1.Action done purely for others- sarve bhavantu sukhinaha. 2. Ishwara prityartham – to follow Dharma i.e. to conform to Ishwara's Will [laws of cosmos] - done for all of existence- eco [human animal plant etc] friendliness. 3. To act for freedom from desire- to choose set aside one's desire e.g. not eating a favourite food, to fulfil another's wish – not to exert one's free will. Because when we eat what we like it is the senses that are driving you- while feeding the monster of desire. The desire for freedom does not come into this category of desire- mokshakankshi.

Sh. 26 Upanayana, marriage rituals are sanskaras and at the end of which the word Sat is used. Sat bhava, Sadhu bhaave iti etad prayujate[used] – sat bhaave in the sense of Reality and Saadhu- good. [bhaave could mean meaning and it could also mean – becoming Shankara uses the latter – not so good person, now becomes consistently good following dharma]

Shloka 27

यज्ञे तपसि दाने च स्थितिः सदिति चोच्यते ।

कर्म चैव तदर्थीयं सदित्येवाभिधीयते ॥ 27 ॥

And steadfastness in sacrifice, austerity and charity is likewise spoken of as 'Sat' and action for the sake of God is verily termed 'Sat'.

Shankara: Sacrifice the act of sacrifice, gift and austerity spoken of by the learned as 'tadarthiyam karma' – as action done for the sake of the Lord whose triple designation is the subject matter here. These acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity, even such of them as are not of the Sattvik class and are imperfect turn out to be Sattvik and perfect ones, on applying to them with faith the triple designation of Brahman- Om Tat Sat.

It may be further explained thus: A son when born is said to come into existence. From the standpoint of the Absolute he never exists. Thus, the word Sat meaning Real is properly applied, only to Brahman, is also applied to a son who is unreal or only relatively real. Similarly, the term 'Sat' properly applicable to Brahman who is absolutely good and absolutely auspicious, is applied to a man whose conduct is not good or only relatively good or to an act which is not auspicious or only relatively auspicious. This is only to illustrate how to imperfectly perform acts of sacrifice, gifts and austerity, **the triple designation may be applied – as enjoined here- with a view to make them perfect.**

Shloka 28

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत् ।

असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह ॥ 28 ॥

An oblation which is offered, a gift given, an austerity practised and whatever good deed is performed, if it done without faith, it is termed naught i.e. 'asat'; therefore, it is of no avail here or hereafter.

Shankara: Shloka 28 Works without faith are fruitless. Charity given to the brahmanas, deed such as adoration and obeisance, as they are 'Asat' if done devoid of faith and they are quite outside the path by which Ishvara may be reached. It is naught though costing much trouble, as it is of no use here as it is despised by the wise, nor can it produce any effect hereafter.

Summary:

As given by Shankara: The teaching of this discourse may be summed up. There are devotees who, though ignorant of the scriptures, are yet endued with faith, and who, according to the nature of their faith, may be classified as Sattvic, Rajasic, or Tamasic. These should cultivate pure Sattva by avoiding Rajasic and Tamasic kinds of food, worship, gifts and austerity, and resorting exclusively to Sattvic ones. When their acts of worship, gift, and austerity are found defective, they may be perfected by uttering the three designations of Brahman- Om, Tat, and Sat.

With their reason [Buddhi] thus purified, they should engage in the study of scriptures and in the subsequent stages of investigation into the nature of Brahman. Thereby they attain a direct perception of Truth and are finally liberated.

After understanding the importance of Om Tat Sat felt inspired to learn more about Om and the little research done on It is given below. My humble prayer at the feet of the Lord is take me unto You O Beloved and as I pass this body may I be chanting Om Om Om!

Reflection and Exercises:

1. What is Shraddha? Give examples.
2. How should charity be given?
3. What are the kinds of Tapas?
4. Importance and significance of Om.
5. Summarise the discourse.

*The reader is encouraged to read the essay on **Om** from the **book Essays on Ancient Wisdom**, available on the same website.*

**Discourse 18 - Mokshasanyasa yoga - The
Yoga of liberation through the path of
Knowledge and Self- surrender.**

Jai Shri Krishna! We are onto the last discourse in the Bhagavad Gita. We will move with awareness and great attention for now the blessed Lord will summarise His entire teachings and lead us inwards. The whole of the Gita is a dialogue between Shri Krishna and Arjuna, the discourses 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 17 and 18 begin with Arjuna's questions, and thus we get the nectar of wisdom throughout. In this discourse, Arjuna merely wants to know the difference, between tyaga and sanyasa and the blessed Lord, has elaborately told him all he would ever need to know if in doubt. Shri Krishna would never advocate renunciation as a way of life- sanyaas as against tyaga which is renunciation of the fruit of action, not action, for else Arjuna would quickly latch on to sanyaas!

Shankara says not only has the Lord summed up, the doctrine of the Gita Shastra, but also the whole of the Vedic doctrine. Verily, whatever had been taught earlier can be found in this discourse.

When we bring this wisdom into our daily life, we are sure to conquer the demoniacal nature, the tamasic tendencies and gain deep devotion taking refuge at the feet of the Lord, or in His arms, or have His arm hold you, or you embrace Him as your child, or look up to Him as your father – whatever one chooses to worship Him as, so shall be your experience. If that, is not your nature and you are inclined to being a Jnyani, what better science, than here to be understood, and even if you are a yogi all practices, are given, so you can practice and reach the Supreme Ultimate goal – Brahman. All through one would have to dedicate every action, word, and thought to the Lord - Karma yoga to purify our minds, such that, the Lord can be reflected gloriously therein. Vedanta says Brahma Jnyan cannot be the result of any karma- this is clear, for Karma, has an objective fruit and Brahma is not an object. However, karma yoga is an essential aspect for chitta shuddhi, without which Jnana cannot be revealed. For embodied being, Shri Krishna advocates the path of Bhakti, and true to His word He appears within, and one attains wholeness! No more lack, no more fear, no more desire left, for the Blessed Lord is with thee! Can one ever imagine the power of the Universe and the Creator within? Beyond all imagination, beyond all comprehension!

So now let us listen, read, contemplate with devotion, attention and complete absorption in what the Lord indicates.

Shloka 1

अर्जुन उवाच ।

सन्न्यासस्य महाबाहो तत्त्वमिच्छामि वेदितुम् ।

त्यागस्य च हृषीकेश पृथक्केशिनिषूदन ॥ १ ॥

Arjuna said: O Mighty armed Shri Krishna, O inner controller of all, O slayer of Keshi, I wish to know severally the truth of Sanyasa and Tyaga.

Shankara: Sanyasa- the connotation of the term sanyasa, and the connotation of the term Tyaga, as distinguished and separate from each other, was not clear to Arjuna from the earlier discourses. Arjuna addresses the Lord, the son of Vasudeva as Keshi-nisudan i.e. the slayer of Keshi who was an Asura [demon]. Keshi had taken the form of a horse and was creating havoc in Braj. Here Arjuna addresses Shri Krishna thus, so that the Lord may slay the demon of doubt in his mind. Arjuna also addresses the Lord as Mahabaho- the mighty armed one- because to kill this demon one needs strength. Who can wield such strength? Only the one who has controlled his senses, hence- Hrishikesh as well.

Sanyas is a way of life, a Karmatyaga that means the giving up of all actions arising from desire

Shloka 2

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं सन्न्यासं कवयो विदुः ।

सर्वकर्मफलत्यागं प्राहुस्त्यागं विचक्षणाः ॥ २ ॥

Shri Bhagwan said: Some sages understand Sanyasa as the giving up of all actions motivated by desire; and the wise declare that Tyaga consists in relinquishing the fruit of all actions.

There are three different types of action, and the doer is accordingly labelled. A kaamyas karmi- is one who acts to fulfil his/her desire- which almost defines us all. Such a one is also called Bhogi as he experiences the fruits thereof, as well, both sooner and later. The second is the yogi who has made moksha his

goal, therefore, according to the bidding of Shri Krishna he/she renounces the fruit of every thought, word and deed, thereby not creating any further bondage of karma, as he does not desire the fruit, the question of karma accruing to him/her does not arise.

The third is a Sanyasi who chooses a way of life through which he renounces action itself and dedicates his life to attain Brahmajnyaan.

Ekknath says by renunciation is meant giving up of selfish living, and thinking. Therefore, it means releasing love which, puts the welfare of all first. It means not trying to build happiness for a few, by exploitation of the many. An entire society can be built with love as its foundation, with plenty of room for every legitimate human need and activity.

All action arises from Raga and Dvesha – likes and dislikes are the motivating factors. We either desire an object or want to avoid it. Keeping this in mind, self-observation will always result in clarity of vision. It will also give the much needed '*pause*,' for focussing, on our ultimate goal -moksha.{vide. Ch. 3. Sh. 34.]

Kaamyanaam- of desires, actions born of desires should be given up, because these desires are usually selfish, and arise due to the false identification with the body mind intellect complex. Once I believe I am this body and mind- with these opinions, likes and dislikes, I am automatically bound to protect the territory, much like a dog who marks his territory by passing urine! Imagine we probably are doing much the same. Some sages say give up the actions, this on the face of it seems much more difficult than giving up the fruits of these actions. When Shri Krishna says surrender the fruit of the actions to the Lord- it means- the outcome is never in your hands as many unknown, not computable and variable factors are at play, but more importantly then Karma will not accrue to you. We see many accidents, plane crashes etc taking place even after taking utmost precautions, therefore it is only wise to surrender the fruit of the action, at the feet of the Lord. This takes away any anxiety and liberates one from attachment, as well as ensures general welfare- why? Because when one does not hanker after the fruit, he or she does what is best for all.

Shankara: A few sages understand by sanyasa the abandonment of *Kaamyakarma* i.e. works such as the Ashwamedha Yajnya, accompanied with the desire for fruits. The learned declared that it means abandonment of the fruits of all the works [mainly sacrifices] that are performed, *nitya* and *naimittika*, ordinary and extraordinary duties i.e. the fruits that may accrue to the performer. The *nitya* [daily chores like brushing one's teeth eating, sleep] and *naimittika* [Nai Nithya karma shraddha, vivah] depends on social background, caste and custom.

Anupatti- objection to this instruction is: The abandonment of the interested works and the abandonment of the fruits of the works intended to be expressed, [by the two words – i.e. sanyasa and tyaga] is in a way, one and the same as far as the general idea is concerned, namely, abandonment. They are not quite so distinct in meaning as the words 'jar' and 'cloth.' Karma i.e. action is bound to produce fruit, how is it that abandoning their fruits is here spoken of? it is like speaking of abandoning of, a barren woman's son.

Answer: No such objection can be raised here, as in the opinion of the Lord, ordinary and occasional duties produce their own fruits, no doubt, as Shri Krishna says later, that those alone who have renounced all desire for the fruit of action, are Tyagins, and have no connection with the fruits thereof, and therefore no "karma" can accrue to them. Those who have desire will have to reap the fruit of the ordinary works which they are bound to perform.

Shloka 5:

यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत् ।

यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ॥ 5 ॥

Acts of sacrifice, charity and penance are not worth giving up. They must be performed. For sacrifice, charity and penance are all purifiers to the wise men.

Ekknath comments that the action of sacrifice - yajnya, actually, should be understood in its correct application. First is sacrificing self-will, for the benefit of others- Bahujan sukhaya Bahujan hitaya, This was the principle which King Ashoka followed after having won the Kalinga war, where many were massacred- this sight so changed him, that he never again, ventured to conquer any other land, and instead extended a hand of friendship and protection, to

all neighbouring small states. Even to this day there never has been a monarch who renounced what he had conquered and lived for the benefit of others- historian H.G. Wells writes. This Eknath considers as the ultimate sacrifice which should proceed from the individual to the national level. Eknath further stresses the importance of selfless work and generosity- he says these are not just moral values but of utmost importance, if one wishes to progress on the spiritual path. The Self is covered with layers upon layers of ego-grime which needs to be wiped clean before it can be revealed.

Shankara: The obligatory works should be performed without attachment.

Shloka 6:

एतान्यपि तु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलानि च ।

कर्तव्यानीति मे पार्थ निश्चितं मतमुत्तमम् ॥ 6 ॥

Hence these acts of sacrifice, charity and penance and all other acts of duty too must be performed without attachment and expectation of reward. This is my well- considered and supreme verdict Arjuna.

Swami Rama: Arjuna has asked Sri Krishna a very practical question as to what is meant by Sanyasa and what is meant by tyaga. Shri Krishna answers by first citing the wise. In this shloka Shri Krishna says that some learned men advise that all actions should be given up for every action results in a whirlpool of reaction, and the performer is then caught in the whirlpool of action - reaction. Other learned men advise that good actions need not be given up for they need not bind the individual. This can work only if the aspirant is not attached to the fruit of action. Shri Krishna advises that the three actions of yajnya, charity and austerity are considered righteous actions and should not be given up. The fruit thereof however, should be surrendered at the feet of the Lord.

Eknath ji gives the example of what true yajnya in the sense given by Shri Krishna is, he gives the example from his own life. He was a student of literature and right from high school days he had nurtured the desire of being an author and a public speaker. After some rejections he got accepted and became quite famous through his columns in the Hindu newspaper and also as a speaker. None of these contributions he says qualify as yajnya for although they were innocent desires in themselves, they did not benefit others. Till one day he was

invited to give a keynote address by the head monk of the Ramakrishna muth and when he went to speak- his love for Shri Ramakrishna simply took over and the speech left him more spell bound, even than his audience, for he had gotten so absorbed he hardly knew what he said. It was as if he heard it for the first time. He then on, never prepared or rehearsed any speech and all that flows spontaneously benefits those that hear it. That is yajnya!

Throughout the Bhagvad Gita if there is one thing Shri Krishna stressed, it is - perform action. The take home message has always been the attitude with which one performs any action. In spite of having heard the Bhagvad Gita since quite early in my life I don't think I understood much of this aspect - and now feel we need maturity, and readiness as also the conviction- shraddha to follow what we are being taught. If instead of asking what is in it for me? If we asked - will this benefit all (me included)? Our action would be termed the right yajnya as per Shri Krishna's advice. Then there would not even be the need, to formally dedicate the fruits of the action to the Lord for the Lord dwells in all. Worse would be, to desist from action, for not doing an action is an action in itself and that benefits no one, once again you have failed as per Bhagwan. The stress is on, performing action, knowing full well that God resides in every heart and thereby serve Him alone. The sense of separateness, is what comes in the way. If we only keep reminding ourselves, of what the truth is in 'me and you' it might become our second nature, to treat the other as a self who functions differently- that's all.

Shloka 7:

नियतस्य तु सन्न्यासः कर्मणो नोपपद्यते ।

मोहात्तस्य परित्यागस्तामसः परिकीर्तितः ॥ ७ ॥

*{Prohibited acts and those motivated by desire should no doubt be given up}
But it is not advisable to abandon a prescribed duty. Such abandonment out of ignorance has been declared as tamasic.*

Shloka 8:

दुःखमित्येव यत्कर्म कायक्लेशभयात्त्यजेत् ।

स कृत्वा राजसं त्यागं नैव त्यागफलं लभेत् ॥ ८ ॥

Should anyone give up his duties for fear of physical strain, thinking that all actions are verily painful- practising such rajasic form of renunciation, he does not reap the fruit of renunciation.

Shloka 9:

कार्यमित्येव यत्कर्म नियतं क्रियतेऽर्जुन ।

सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यागः सात्त्विको मतः ॥ 9 ॥

The prescribed duty which is performed simply because it has to be performed, giving up attachment and fruit, that alone has been recognised as the satvic form of renunciation.

Shloka 10:

न द्वेष्ट्यकुशलं कर्म कुशले नानुषज्जते ।

त्यागी सत्त्वसमाविष्टो मेधावी छिन्नसंशयः ॥ 10 ॥

He who has neither aversion for action which is leading to bondage {akushla} nor attachment to that which is conducive to blessedness- imbued with the quality of goodness, he has all his doubts resolved, is intelligent and a man of true renunciation.

Swami Rama: Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that renunciation should never be done when confused, deluded, fearful or attached to personal gain. The Rajasic temperament is one striving to achieve personal gain and renounces under the fear of afflictions. The Rajasic person searches for pleasure, and is afraid of pain. The tamasic attitude is one of ignorance and intoxication. They would renounce so that they can indulge in inertia and indolence. Both the Rajasic and Tamasic become a burden to society and the nation at large, they give a bad name to the path of fire and light. The satvic person never shirks his duties and performs them skilfully. He has learnt how to suffer for others and live for them. He is never tired of giving of himself for the benefit of others. The Sattvicas are of clear mind and always successful. The Rajasicas are confused and the Tamasicas are ignorant.

Ek Nath: Sri Krishna is again and again explaining that renunciation is a mental state and just handing over some possessions on an impulse does not constitute renunciation. Attachment is a sanskara, a living force in the mind. It

is this motivation which defines renunciation. He further classifies it as usual into three different types.

Those who give up any action to escape one's responsibilities have a totally escapist attitude and is considered tamasic. This is not only true of individuals but also corporates- they shirk their social responsibilities and simply say it is not in their purview in the first place e.g. health care. The rajasic attitude renounces only to get something else or if forced due to suffering or pain e.g. giving up cigarettes when the cough becomes unbearable. Yet, it is better to give up than not to give up- at least it would result in some physical benefit, but it has no spiritual gain. Rajas wants his cake and wants to eat it too.

Eknathji's spiritual Guru was his grandmother, who taught him to renounce attachment- 'you be in control' she explained. This injunction stood him in good stead. One should not have to be forced to give up anything. One should find it a privilege to give- sattvic renunciation.

Let me begin with the Shloka 10: to fathom this shloka one has to be intuitive and insightful. Sri Krishna is indicating the position of the Self within. When one identifies with the Ego- one gets into the three gunas and will act accordingly- tamasic / rajasic / or sattvic. When however, one has gone beyond the gunas and verily merges with the Self, the question of aversion and craving for fruits of action does not arise and thus he does not have to renounce anything at all. For his actions will not lead to bondage. All other actions even satvic will yield the fruit of good fortune which will again bind, unless of course we have totally surrendered the fruit thereof- which is all we can do while still bound by ego!

Shankara: For Shloka 9: Shankara explains the progress from renunciation of fruits of action to renunciation of all action. When the man who is qualified for Karma Yoga, performs obligatory actions without attachment, and without a longing for results, his inner sense [Antahkaran], unsoiled by desire for results and regenerated by the performance of the obligatory duties, becomes pure. When pure and tranquil, the inner sense is fit for contemplation of the Self. He is now ready to attain to Self- knowledge- Jnana Nishtha i.e. established in Self Knowledge with devotion.

For shloka 10: Kaamy karma is considered as evil, as it becomes the cause of samsara, by producing a body and action; abandonment of the desire to the fruit of action, being conducive to Moksha by purifying the mind, is considered good. The wise one neither hates the evil nor is attached to the good, he is saturated with Sattva, which causes a discriminative knowledge of Self and the not- Self.

As he becomes thus possessed of wisdom, his doubt caused by Avidya [Maaya], is cut asunder by the conviction that knowledge of the true nature of the Self, is alone the means of attaining the Highest Bliss, and there is no other means. That is to say, when a man who is qualified [for Karmayoga] practices Karma yoga in the manner described above, and thereby becomes gradually refined in the self[antahkarna], then he knows himself to be that Self [That Brahman]- and is devoid of birth or any change of condition. He renounces all action, in thought he remains without acting or causing to act he attains devotion in wisdom, he attains freedom from action. Thus, the purpose of the Karmayoga taught above is given in this verse.

For the unenlightened man, on the other hand, who wears a body, by way of identifying with it, who disabused of the notion that the Self is the agent of action, firmly believes that he himself is the agent, for him Karmayoga is necessary. Renunciation of fruits is alone possible for the ignorant. He is said to be a tyagaag in though he is the performer of actions, for he still wears the body as himself- body-wearer; whereas, karma sanyasin can renounce all actions as well, for he is not a body wearer, unidentified with the body, hence even if he performs action, he has already renounced them- karma sanyas.

The fruit of any action may be evil [hell], good [Deva lok] or mixed [human birth]. It accrues to the unenlightened even tyagaag unless he has reached the highest level of discriminative right knowledge – and is the pure Self- the Paramhamsa- Pravrajakas who are Jnana-Nishtha- i.e. they have exclusive devotion to Right Knowledge which cannot but destroy avidya and other seeds of samsara

The Lord then extolling Sankhya explains the factors in the production of an act.

Shloka 14:

अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् ।

विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥ 14 ॥

The following are the factors operating towards the accomplishment of actions, viz. the body and the doer, the organs of different kinds, and the different functions of the manifold kinds; and the fifth is Daiva, latencies of the past actions.

Swami Rama: Samkhya explains there are 5 factors for any action to be performed. First dwelling place for his actions- the body- adhishtana. Second is the performer of action, and the third are proper instruments for performing the actions. Fourth factor, is proper effort towards the desired result and finally, fifth, favourable circumstances for the action. There is no such factor as luck, this is a delusion - there is no supreme being who favours some and not others. Luck is within the domain of the individual and not Providence. It is the joy one experiences after performing the action and getting the right result. **It is therefore given as the last factor. Past actions create the milieu in which any action fructifies.**

Eknath: The body- is adhishtanam is the first, word karta- is in fact the ego - the one who takes the onus of doing, on himself, the body which carries out the action, the means and the action itself are all, in a sense made up of the same stuff- Sri Krishna reminds us- Prakriti. All of which results in karma so too, is daivam- It is not fate or destiny for the Gita does not present anything as preordained. In the way that a seed, its nutrients, the soil it is in and the climate are all a part of the environment, that makes the tree grow out of the seed. However, doing whatever one likes and saying I am not the doer does not absolve one of action - the whole point is to live responsibly. Karma will still accrue. Karanam refers to the instruments / means of action involved- wrong means can never lead to the right end.

Often times I must confess when I do something objectionable like losing my temper or being rude (seems more often than I would care to admit) I console myself saying- I am not the doer- it is Prakriti and the gunas that work. Now having read Eknath, and of course I knew it too, I know that I must take responsibility for my actions and karma accrues irrespective as long as we

identify with the body. The other two shlokas I use to reassure myself are Discourse 4 shloka 36 and Discourse 9, shloka 30, saying that even the one who has committed many sins comes to Me once he has made a firm resolve to do so. This shloka is pointing to what is the cause of creation- and that is -karma- done by a karta- i.e. the one who feels he is the one performing actions, when actually Sri Krishna has repeatedly instructed us that it is Prakruti which makes it all happen. The catch 22 is we are in the grip of Prakruti until we realise we are Purusha and we cannot realise we are That until we escape the grip of Prakruti! So, a karta and karma are two factors - the third in fact the first in the shloka- is adhishtana which literally means the support (of this misconception that we are the body) or dwelling - body- for without the body no action can be performed. The fourth are the instruments- senses and the means to gratify the senses which include the mind - the six senses. Finally, the fifth - daivam - loosely translated as fate and to me, this is the unknown factor- x-, when with little effort we attain a lot, and with great effort sometimes we attain naught! The sages tell us this too has been crafted by us in the unknown past and is not chance or luck or a random event. It could be our hidden emotions of good / ill will, for the world and all that we imagine is secret and of no consequence. When we surrender ourselves at the lotus feet of the Lord we escape the grip of Prakruti. Shankara interpretes Daivam as the Devas presiding over each sense organ e.g. Agni for eyes, Akash for ears, Vayu for touch \ Varun for taste and Pruthvi for smell. Daivam can also be interpreted as Karma.

Note: Shankara on shloka 16: The unenlightened one due to his ignorance, identifies the Self with those five causes and looks upon the pure Self as the agent of the action which is really accomplished by those five causes, for his Buddhi has not been trained in Vedanta, not been trained by a master's teaching, has not been trained in the principles of reasoning. Even he who, while maintaining the existence of a disembodied Self, looks upon the pure Self as the agent, is a man of untrained understanding, he is therefore a man of perverted intelligence taking the wrong direction, continually leading to birth and death. Only the realization of the nonagency of Self leads to absolution from the effects of all works.

Shloka 17:

यस्य नाहङ् कृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते ।

हत्वासपि स इमाल्लोकान्न हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥ 17॥

He whose mind is free from doer-ship, and whose reason is not affected by worldly objects and activities, does not really kill even having killed all these people, nor does any sin accrue to him.

Swami Rama: For any action to be performed- place, effort, agent, means and circumstance- are the five factors required as enumerated above. The one who is identified with the ego separates himself from the unity of life and simply adds negativity and karma to himself. Only the one who surrenders totally, all the fruits of action and even himself, at the feet of the Lord creates no harm whatsoever. The one on the battlefield who kills for protecting the boundary of his country incurs no karma. This, however, does not absolve the fanatics who in the name of religion kill and create terror for their own selfish purposes. Throughout the Bhagvad Gita Sri Krishna is teaching Arjuna how to fight- the attitude required. The one who sees no difference between himself and others, and fights for what is right incurs no sin, while surrendering the results at the feet of the Lord.

Eknath: All of us have made mistakes and carry a hidden burden of karma on our shoulders. This is due to our false identification with the body. The lack of progress in meditation and on the spiritual path, is due to this huge hidden burden of karma. The simple way to lessen it is not by analysis or nullifying one karma after another. The simple remedy is every day when one wakes, put the other first and BE KIND. An active ego is the very source of negative thinking and there is no other way to deal with it than to do selfless service. The sage who has realised the Self has closed all his karma bank accounts, and the great good karma he does he directs to the accounts, of all who reach up to him, such that their burden becomes less.

Karma does not accrue to the One who has realised the Self - because both the karta and bhokta are non-existent in him. He has seen through the game and knows that Prakruti and the gunas, are playing on the bosom of consciousness- Purusha. But for the common man this is not so because he is completely identified with his body, convinced that he is the one who performs actions.

The Self is identical with Purusha and has the power of Prakruti but is not bound by it. Thus, such a one is gunateet, one who has transcended the gunas. The play is happening by its own momentum, and the Purusha is the still, silent presence of pure awareness. **Practically let us at least start to suspect the reality of the “doer” and question the origin of this fictitious character.**

Shankara: Having started this proposition in the words “he slays not, nor is he slain” [ii.19] tracing states [ii.20] as the reason there, for the immutability of the Self, having in the beginning of the Sashtra [ii.21], taught that to a wise man there is no need for works, and having introduced the subject here and there in the middle and expatiated upon it, the Lord now concludes it in the words, that, the wise man “kills not, nor is bound,” with a view to sum up the teaching of the sashtra. Thus in the absence of the egoistic feeling of embodied existence, the sanyasins renounce all avidya- generated action, and it is therefore right to say that the threefold fruit of action “evil, good, and mixed,” [xviii.12] does not accrue to sanyasins; the further conclusion also is inevitable that quite the reverse is the lot of others. Now will be mentioned the impulses to action:

Shloka 18:

**ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं परिज्ञाता त्रिविधा कर्मचोदना ।
करणं कर्म कर्तेति त्रिविधः कर्मसंग्रहः ॥ 18 ॥**

The Knower, Knowledge and object of knowledge- these three motivate action. Even so the doer, the organs and activity- these are three constituents of action.

Swami Rama: To live in this world these three are needed: the object of knowledge, the knower and the instrument[termed jnana triputi]. Actions cannot be performed without these three and one needs to have a profound knowledge of these as well. These are again subdivided by the gunas, and their action should also be understood.

Jnanam is Knowledge, Jneyam is object of knowledge and Parijnyata is the Knower. The knower must have some knowledge of the object before he desires it and acts towards obtaining it. This then is termed technically as ‘jnana triputi.’ Each of these can be sattvic, rajasic or tamasic. Let us now learn with examples what is emant,

Ekmath: Shloka 17/18.

Action happens with the help of the Karta, Karma and the Karanam -organs used for performing the action. None of this would happen without knowledge and knowledge of the objects and the knower of all this. Each of these is very subjective and hence differs between individuals, and the variety of these impressions is infinite, yet there is only one consciousness. These three motivate action, and only the sense of karta and the action can be changed, not the organs which are the same in all.

Now how does this knowledge arise? To whom does this knowledge happen? These are the questions asked in the Kenopanishad by the student to the teacher. When one contemplates deeply, one realises that if there are two realities- Matter and Consciousness - then one has to postulate an interface and it is perplexing then to introduce a third reality, where this reaction or interaction takes place. An abstract thought arises from an apparently solid stuff-brain. Advaita Vedanta explains there is only One Reality, and all happens within It. The apparent forms and diversity lead us to believe in a subject / object reality, which is an absolute necessity for any experience to happen. This dimension is such. Now let us ask the primary question do we want to transcend suffering? If yes, then we must realise the unity, underlying the experience of duality and suddenly the Truth of creation will dawn! In modern times, with the advent of AI and three dimensional experiences in every aspect of virtual reality, the concept of Mithya has become plausible. Jagat Mithya Brahma Satya says Adi Shankaracharya- this means the world, we included are a virtual, not actual reality. We have taken the video game to be real and become involved inextricably - until the Guru drags us out of this hypnosis.

Shankara: Knowledge: any knowledge in general, similarly, the object known refers to objects in general, to all objects of knowledge. The knower:- the experiencer, partaking of the nature of the upadhi, is a creature of avidya. Therefore, the impulses are threefold, according to the gunas.

Shloka 20:

**सर्वभूतेषु येनैकं भावमव्ययमीक्षते ।
अविभक्तं विभक्तेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि सात्त्विकम् ॥ 20 ॥**

That by which man perceives one imperishable divine existence as undivided and equally present in all individual beings, know that knowledge to be satvic.

Shloka 21:

पृथक्त्वेन तु यज्ज्ञानं नानाभावान्पृथग्विधान् ।
वेति सर्वेषु भूतेषु तज्ज्ञानं विद्धि राजसम् ॥ 21 ॥

The knowledge by which man cognises many existences of various kinds, as apart from one another, in all beings, know that knowledge to be Rajasic.

Shloka 22:

यत्तु कृत्स्नवदेकस्मिन्कार्ये सक्तमहैतुकम् ।
अतत्त्वार्थवदल्पं च तत्तामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ 22 ॥

Again, that which clings to one body as if it were whole, and which is irrational, has no real grasp of truth and is trivial, has been declared as Tamasic.

Swami Rama: Has taken shlokas 20/21/22 together and rightly so for they describe the three kinds of knowledge. The one who has sattvic knowledge sees the whole and identifies with the Self, he therefore neither feels sorrow at death or joy at birth he is in a state of equilibrium. Those who see the multiplicity in the unity have rajasic knowledge and those who only look at what gets them immediate gain and are mostly ignorant are those with tamasic knowledge. They do not consider consequences and act selfishly.

Meaning of avibhaktam: first of all let us understand what differences can exist. Vedanta teaches the following:

Swajatiya Bheda -differences in a given species, foreexample woman – no one woman is the same as another.

Vijatiya Bheda-difference in things, species e.g. man and dog, table and floor.

Swagat Bheda – difference in the same being e.g. head is different from leg etc.

None of the above exist in Brahman – there is no other Brahman to compare with, and It has no parts. Space is the closest analogy one can give.

The one who knows the underlying oneness of the diverse forms has Sattvic Jnana. One who sees differences is of a Rajasic knowledge and the one who

clings to only his standpoint and rejects every other is Tamasic. What comes to mind is religion- Sanatana Dharma [Vedanta] is the Sattvic Knowledge. Some sects of Hinduism such as Shaivite/Vaishnavites could be termed Rajasic. But Islam and Christianity to some extent are downright Tamasic, for these religions do not admit of any salvation for members of other religions, who are doomed to eternal damnation!

Ekknath: Has also taken all three together. He explains Tamasic knowledge as that which looks at its own immediate gain alone. For example, a scientist working on a part of a war weapon - they carefully design and work hard at it, not for a moment considering the effect it would have on humanity-themselves included. Rajasic knowledge is that kind which ensures personal gain. He gives the example of Thomas Eddison- who patented the incandescent electric lamp and also sold generators etc. with meters so that at the end of each discovery he received both name/fame and cash. That kind of genius is rajasic. Finally, the sattvic genius is possible for all of us ordinary people, who can see what is good for humanity, at large and work together in a concentrated manner, putting every difference aside, creating a society which is - peaceful and living in harmony with nature too.

At the beginning of life as even a toddler we are taught how to fend for ourselves- every action word and thought is about how “i” can survive in a comfortable and creative manner, such that I attain both name-fame and wealth- this is the rajasic shiksha[training], we get and follow through life. To my mind this is essential for survival, but not for ostentatious living, which, is where it leads, unfortunately. The world being the relative reality there never seems a limit to what is necessary- the boundary between what is necessary and what is luxury is forever expanding -thanks to the advertisement industry and human greed. Those of us who are just too lazy or ill motivated or get into addictions are so distracted that they cannot make it in the worldly sense and the question of spiritual clarity does not arise. This then is tamasic knowledge.

If we could limit our earning to just as much as is necessary for roti kapda makan [food, clothes, house] and dedicate, all the rest of the time to spiritual pursuits, it might be possible even as a householder to attain spiritual maturity. This would be sattvic knowledge. Had we been guided to the TRUTH at the

formative years we too could have dedicated our energies towards the goal of life. One could argue however, that the time required to achieve excellence in any field precludes any spiritual aspiration, and if this be renounced there would be no “progress” in the mundane world. To this there is only one answer - the so-called progress materially has caused an enormous regress on the spiritual front. Yet, I dare say, this very disillusionment with material progress has suddenly set the majority thinking- what is it that leads to ultimate happiness? This further confirms my belief in the ‘fitness of things.’ It is exactly how it should be and irrespective of the seeming direction we are facing- we are all evolving according to the grand design.

At all times if we were taught how short our life on earth is, even if hundred years - we might have dedicated a specific time for sadhana, in the day irrespective of our other preoccupations and we could then find the balance.

Summary of Shlokas 20 to 35: Describes the nature of the factors given below in terms of the Gunas, The Sattvic quality being that which recognizes the Self as non-doer and every action is done without attachment i.e. asanga, as also in tune with Dharma. The Rajasic believes the Self as body/mind and works towards its own betterment. The Tamasic is one totally identified, deluded, ignorant of the right from the wrong and most lethargic, does not give up fear, grief, depression and lust.

- Knowledge
- Action
- Agent [the one who identifies with the Upadhi-body/mind/]
- Intellect – knowledge is different from the intellect.
- Firmness
- Pleasure given below in detail.

Shloka 36:

सुखं त्विदानीं त्रिविधं शृणु मे भरतर्षभ ।
अभ्यासाद्रमते यत्र दुःखान्तं च निगच्छति ॥ 36 ॥

Shloka 37:

यत्तदग्रे विषमिव परिणामेऽमृतोपमम् ।
तत्सुखं सात्त्विकं प्रोक्तमात्मबुद्धिप्रसादजम् ॥ 37 ॥

Now hear from me the threefold joy too. That in which the striver finds enjoyment through practice of adoration, meditation and service to God etc., and whereby he reaches the end of sorrow- such is joy, though appearing as poison in the beginning, tastes like nectar in the end; hence that joy, born as it is of the placidity of mind brought about by meditation on God, has been declared as sattvic.

Shloka 38:

विषयेन्द्रियसंयोगाद्यत्तदग्रेऽमृतोपमम् ।

परिणामे विषमिव तत्सुखं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥ 38॥

The delight which ensues from the contact of the senses with their objects is eventually poison like, though appearing first as nectar; hence it has been spoken of rajasica.

Shloka 39:

यदग्रे चानुबन्धे च सुखं मोहनमात्मनः ।

निद्रालस्यप्रमादोत्थं ततामसमुदाहृतम् ॥ 39॥

That which stupefies the self during its enjoyment as well as in the end- derived from sleep, indolence, and obstinate error, such delight has been called tamasic.

Swami Rama: Sattvic joy may seem like poison or at the least bitter medicine in the beginning but is nectar at the end. For it leads one to the Self that is the source of unfettered perennial joy. Everyone in the world is looking for joy that does not change. The reason why worldly pleasures cease to give joy are twofold- one, they are fleeting and two the one who is experiencing the pleasure also changes. It is only man, who has the capacity to find this joy for he has free will, all other creatures are governed by nature. When one can clearly see, that mundane joy is the source of misery in the long run, he starts to persist on the spiritual path and then one eventually taps into the source of perennial joy that is not contaminated and is without object. Love that is universal, unchanging and excludes none is experienced. The fountain of love and joy springs eternally, in the heart of the one who abides in the Self. Those who chase objects to attain joy, find that the objects keep changing and afford less and less joy each time. However, they keep pursuing this kind of joy which

is called -rajasic. Those who indulge in sleep, laziness and stupor are enjoying the tamasic type of joy.

Eknath: These shlokas are of utmost importance for they reveal the futility of indulgence in pleasure. First and foremost a gentle reminder that all that is born WILL die. Once that is borne in mind suddenly the perspective changes. Eknathji talks of the love of his Guru who just could not bear the fact that her little grandson would die. She made every effort to ensure he discovers that which is immortal in him, if not awakened, he would surmise that he would be dead. **The love a Guru bears his disciple is unmatched. To discover our immortal Self we need to remember our mortality.** She made sure of imprinting the transience of life on his mind, even as a child. Thus, a sensitivity developed. He often looked at the young beautiful faces of his students, and thought, the ravages of time would not spare any- although this seems a morbid thought it filled him with deep tenderness. The same must have happened to the Buddha, who left his beautiful wife and young babe, in search for that which is immutable and timeless. When one constantly reminds oneself of the transience of existence- there is not time for anger, resentment, selfishness - all too soon all will be gone- so give and be kind, should be our attitude. As one grows older one dimly realises this, but by then the habit patterns are so fixed, it is difficult to change. The last verse of the poem Robert Frost wrote, comes to mind:

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

We too have no time to lose before we reach home- our final destination.

Shri Krishna has carefully taught us every aspect of our daily existence. He classifies joy also into the three categories so that we do not delude ourselves. During the course in Vipassana -Theravada Buddhism - we were taught what is samyak and asamyak- meaning what it is that leads to unalloyed joy and good Karma. So, any trading, in intoxicants or arms is considered asamyak aajivika (livelihood)- leading to hell although initially one may enjoy a lot of material

wealth and power. The samadhi one experiences while eating a rasagulla (this used to be my argument with Aai- I said every time you want samadhi just have a rasagulla) - is asamyak - why? Because it is fleeting and leads you into dependence -aasakti- attachment. This then is Rajasic joy which seems pleasant in the beginning but leads ultimately to misery. So much so, that Swami Rama was told by his Guru not to sing- not to sing even the praise of God- he said music is an asuri Shakti and makes you dependent on it.

It is an interesting fact, that whatever the mind is familiar with, it loves to repeat. After all it is all about training the mind- initially, japa, dhyana- mananam, nidhidhyasan all seem words and most irksome. So much effort is required to sustain one's interest. As the groove forms, the ride becomes effortless and enjoyable. This then leads to unalloyed, perennial joy such that is independent, of any outside encumbrance and resides within- if truth be told - it is You! Sat Chit Ananda – is one's very nature, so if all additions, conditions upadhis] are dropped -It remains. This is sattvic joy - for as long as one is in the body the gunas have a hold on us.

Swami Tadatmananda: Silence is the absence of mind activity- so how can the absence of something cause sukha? This is a very Vedantic objection. The logic goes somewhat like this – there is an elephant on my hand and today because it is absent it is Saturday- so how absurd is that? How can the absence of something cause anything else. Notice that the shloka says it is Atmabuddhi prasaadajam- meaning the joy born of the tranquillity of mind is sattvic – this means the absence of the activity of the mind. This apparent contradiction is explained as follows- when the dust is removed from the window pane, the light streams in- similarly when the dust created by thought in the Buddhi is removed i.e. the absence of thoughts allows the light of the Self to shine through and the very nature of the Self is Joy.

Rajasic happiness: Why did we come in contact at all in order that we may cry afterwards? Hence, contact with objects has a beginning, and it also has an end. Therefore, all joys that are born of contact are poison in the end, though they look like honey in the beginning. *Ādyantavantaḥ kaunteya na teṣu ramate budhaḥ*: (Chapter 5 shloka 22.) Wise people do not rejoice in objects of the senses. As an example we could take eating ice cream, initially it delights us,

but if we had it three times a day, day after day the same happiness, gets transformed [parinname] into a pain. Suppose one enjoyed this or that, and many other such fleeting enjoyments and filled the day chasing objects, of enjoyment, not only one would end up dissipated but also exhausted. No contentment ensues, not only that Shankara adds, that it even harms us by obstructing us from Sattvic sukha, and spiritual happiness is masked while one is immersed in the pursuit of worldly happiness. It becomes poison in nature. Today what was considered an unnecessary luxury, is touted and advertised as an absolute necessity by the intense bombardment of the senses by media and advertisements. This leads one into taking debt{EMIs} to get so called necessities, and reminds one of the CHARVAK philosophy, which proposed drink ghee even at the cost of incurring debt, for tomorrow you shall be dead!

"यावज्जीवेत सुखं जीवेद ऋणं कृत्वा घृतं पिबेत्, भस्मीभूतस्य देहस्य पुनरागमनं

कुतः॥" And:

पीत्वा पीत्वा पुनः पीत्वा, यावत् पतति भूतले।

उत्थाय च पुनः पीत्वा, पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते॥

Drink, drink, drink again until you fall to the ground. Then get and drink again,
there is no rebirth!

Isn't this the world today?

Shankara: Dharma is set aside and corruption is the result to such an extent that there is no limit to getting more and more. It therefore leads to harm to others, and to oneself as well like poison. Bala [power], Veerya [energy], Rupa [beauty], Medha [good sense], Pragnya[wisdom] dhana [wealth] Uttसाha[enthusiasm], is lost. This is the result of pursuing rajasic sukha.

About Tamasic sukha: It is a totally perverse idea of happiness e.g. drug addiction. Lying in stupor or sleep and laziness also affords a certain relief - one forgets one's ego for the time and that is like laying a burden down. However, it does not solve any problem, only procrastinates and deludes one. When any kind of awareness is lacking it is tamasic (relief) can it be called joy?

Dosha darshanam [defects] of Vishayananda vs. Paramananda

Quality and property	Vishayananda	Paramananda
Object	Present	Absent
Fleeting	Indeed	Permanent
Has to be repeated	Again and again and what's more it loses its efficacy to give the same degree of pleasure.	No repetition required
Always brings happiness	No can even bring misery. Certain to cause bondage	Does not apply as there is no object
Is it present in the Now?	No always in the past and / or in the future	Only in the Now- Take refuge in the now.
Leads to satisfaction	For a while	All the time
Sense of lack	Felt in its absence	No sense of lack
Dependent?	On things, relationships, etc.	Independent.
Tangible	Yes, very much with all senses	Not tangible, because the very subject is joy
Easy to let go	Not at all due to its tangibility	Once there, question of letting go does not arise
Hard to get	Easy usually, can be difficult	Difficult apparently because we do not want to
Know how to get	Yes, the way is chalked out and can be walked	Even though the way is known – because there is nowhere to go – the paradox gets in the way
Leads to	To begin it tastes like nectar but ends in poison	To begin it is difficult but ends in immortality
Location?	In the mind through sense gratification	Beyond the mind in the I Am
Sanskaras and Vasanas	Cause and effect of it	Have been burned to ash
Time and space	Affected by both	Beyond both
Goal of life?	For the ignorant	For those on the path
Can get both?	No, if one takes the train to the west, he cannot go east	The awakened one may have both, but feels complete even in the absence of Vishayanand.

Process?	Always by becoming, having- if only I had this if only that was not there.	It is in Being.
----------	--	-----------------

Kathopanishad:- Adhyaya 1 Valli 2 **Mantras 1,2** Lord Yama tells Nachiketas about Shreyas and Preyas.

Shreyas is good and Preyas means pleasant.

One who chooses good is blessed and the other who chooses the pleasant loses the true end i.e., gets caught up in Samsara. One cannot pursue both simultaneously .Can one have nectar and poison at the same time? All actions are either preyas or shreyas. Both bind us in Samsara . The wise man (dhira) chooses Shreyas as it leads to moksha. The ignorant (manda) chooses Preyas as he gives more importance to sensory pleasures and hankers for yoga and kshema, growth and protection .

Shankara: No man or God is free from gunas.

Shloka 40:

**न तदस्ति पृथिव्यां वा दिवि देवेषु वा पुनः ।
सत्त्वं प्रकृतिजैर्मुक्तं यदेभिः स्यात्त्रिभिर्गुणैः ॥ 40 ॥**

There is no being on earth, or in the middle region or even among the God or anywhere else, who is free from these three gunas, born of Prakriti.

Swami Rama: All the three worlds- heavens, earth and the galaxies are all enveloped in the three gunas and are the realm of Prakruti. The three gunas have set the stage and a great drama is in progress each has a role to play. It might sattvic, rajasic or tamasic.

Ekknath: Has taken Shlokas 40-45 together because they are a definition of the caste system of ancient India which did not depend on birth but on the natural tendency of an individual. He therefore would like to clarify the situation that prevailed then. The brahmin was expected to turn his back on passions, renounce worldly pleasure, in pursuit of the ideal of Self-realisation. The Kshatriya always protected, and was expected to honour the code of battle even if he dies in the process, he was thus allowed to indulge in the passions of the world. The Vaishya was the business class, and manufactured many objects for consumption, and the Sudra liked to serve e.g. plumber, sweeper. However, all these classes were interchangeable, depending on one's inclination. This degenerated over centuries to the exploitation of the so called,

lower classes. But at the time of the Gita, it was according to the gunas or characteristics of an individual. It should, however, be noted that being born in a Brahmin family, one is naturally vegetarian and exposed to the learning of the scriptures etc from childhood, and thus those that belonged to this class tended to marry the same caste and maintain their purity.

Samkhya philosophy proposes two basic realities, Purusha and Prakruti, yet Prakruti is the Shakti of Purusha only, ultimately, they are one. Sri Krishna explains that all of manifestation is under the gunas which are the strands that create the web of Maya. According to our Shastras there are seven upper lokas and seven lower lokas. The upper are as follows: Swarga (bhuh bhawar bhuva) & Martya (maha janas tapar satya) and the lower are Patala (tal, atal, vitala, nitaal, talaatal, mahaatala and sutala). All of these zones in Time and Space are under the spell. To undo the spell, we would have to transcend the three gunas-Prakruti by rightly orienting our identification to Purusha.

Shankara: The whole of sansar, manifested as action, instruments of action, and results, made of the gunas and set up by Avidya, has been figuratively represented as a tree [xv] and this tree can only be cut asunder, by the strong sword of Vairagya [non-attachment], then that goal should be sought after. From this it may follow that, as everything is made up of the three gunas, a cessation of the cause of sansar, cannot be brought about. Now, it is with a view to show how its cessation can be brought about, **and to sum up the whole teaching of the Vedas and the smritis, the next section is commenced:**

Duties of the four castes ordained according to nature [gunas].

The qualities of a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Sudra.

Devotion to one's duty leads to perfection, not moksha for Moksha is not the result of action. If the duty is done with devotion to knowledge,, the impurities will be washed away.

Every action is wrought with some ill, but just as a poisonous substance does not injure the worm born in that substance, so, he who does the duty ordained according to his nature incurs no sin.

One ought not to abandon one's duty.

Shloka 48:

सहजं कर्म कौन्तेय सदोषमपि न त्यजेत् ।

सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः ॥ 48॥

Therefore, Arjuna, one should not relinquish one's innate duty, even though it has a measure of evil; for all undertakings are beset by some evil, as is the fire covered by smoke.

Swami Rama: Sri Krishna explains that one should assess one's own character and act according to one's own abilities and capabilities. Howsoever, beneficial the duty of another is he should not try to adopt that, this would lead to disorder in the society. Every duty is tainted with some defect even as the lustrous fire is tainted by smoke and therefore one should continue to do one's duty. Every action in the phenomenal world is defective. If one does his duty while surrendering the fruits of the action at the feet of the Lord and performs them with non-attachment no karma will accrue. Swami Rama explains if one wants to practice nonviolence and gives up non-veg food, he still has to live on other life forms, if Arjuna fights a righteous war in order to exterminate evil- he will still cause immense loss of life and destruction. One just has to do his best and leave the rest.

Eknath: Sri Krishna asks drily, "if we are not going to work out our karma who is?" This is the purport of these verses 45-49. To work out one's Karma is the ultimate aim and then to go beyond it. Best done with doing whatever duty we have, with full concentration and skilfully. The place we find ourselves in, is the exact place that is conducive to the higher purpose of life. To work in the environment, we find ourselves in with perfect skill and harmony is the way. No job is perfect it has its limitations and boring routines, as well as commitments. We therefore, have to perform and accept the situation as is and do our best. It is better to perfect our own duty than aspire some other job, for this is what was meant for us. As we progress in meditation and in our dedication, other situations which challenge us more will appear as per our need. Only the one who has attained can take up any karma because it becomes his svadharma.

This shloka initially seemed such a repetition to me and then its importance struck like a thunderbolt- in fact it was so apt for me myself. (I am sure we all

agree me is the most important to me). Being a Gynaecologist one of the operations we are taught to perform is termination of pregnancy- I hated to do that, and refused to, when I started practice for 2 years- until my mother insisted that I should consider myself only as an instrument and perform the surgery, which then I did, but obviously, it was also to increase my practice, yet I hated to do it for I had not conceived for 3-4 years after marriage. So, in every profession there is an element of unpleasant duty- does not mean we change our duty- I could not possibly give up Ob/Gy. Yet nature was with me, I was relocated by chance/destiny, to Dubai where it was illegal- so I was spared from doing what my inner grain did not wish to, doing which had brought me pain. It also entails some failures which cause a lot of emotional pain. With this knowledge, understanding now, a sudden relief floods my being. I can also guide younger colleagues who might feel despondent sometimes.

Shankara: One ought not to abandon one's duty.

Shloka 49: He whose Buddhi is free from attachment to sons, wife, and other objects of attachment, whose self-[antahkaran] is brought under his own control, from whom desire for the body, for life, and for pleasures has fled, a person of this sort who knows the Self attains perfection, to absolute freedom from action [naishkarmyasiddhi], by sanyas. In virtue of his knowledge of the unity of actionless Brahman and the Self, all actions have fled from him.

Shloka 50: Now the Lord proceeds to teach how a man who, having attained perfection by doing his duty in the service of the Lord, comes to the discriminative knowledge of the Self. The Self reveals Himself in Pure reason [Buddhi that is pure.] What is necessary is the mere elimination of the not-Self i.e. the Upadhi of body, mind intellect which resemble the consciousness that pervades it. No more effort to acquire a knowledge of Brahman is required. Though this is quite self-evident, easily knowable, quite near and forming the very Self, [Brahman, it appears to the unenlightened, to those whose Buddhi is carried away by Avidya- as unknown, difficult to know, and very remote, as though He were a separate thing. But to those whose Buddhi has turned away from external phenomena, who have secured the grace of the Guru and attained the serenity of the manas [mind], there is nothing, nothing else so blissful, so well-known, so easily knowable, and quite so near as Brahman.

Accordingly, the knowledge of Brahman is said to be immediately comprehended and unopposed to dharma. It is only the cessation of the perception, of the differentiated forms of the external world, that can lead to a firm grasp of the real nature of the Self. For, the Self is not a thing unknown to anybody at any time, is not a thing to be reached or got rid of or acquired. Thus it is clear that, to those who can discriminate, the Atma-Jnana- Nishtha is easy of attainment. ***It is not for the knowledge of the Self that any effort is needed; it is needed only to prevent us from regarding the not-Self as the Self.***

Shloka 51-53- explains what needs to be done to be free of illusion: self-control, staying in a secluded place, abandoning objects and pleasures, meditating, mantrajapa, vairagya etc. Three factors are imperative- 1. Knowledge of Scriptures [scriptures are the pramaana -means- just like eyes are to see] 2. Teacher who is qualified to expound the scriptures. 3. The Adhikaritvam described in these verses. Once these three are fulfilled, na icchitvam- even if you do not desire to, you will become enlightened.

Shloka 54:

ब्रह्मभूतः प्रसन्नात्मा न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।

समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मदभक्तिं लभते पराम् ॥ 54॥

Established in identity with Brahma (who is Truth Consciousness and Bliss solidified), and cheerful in mind the Sankhya yogi no longer grieves nor craves for anything. The same to all beings, such a yogi attains supreme devotion to me.

Swami Rama: The highest state of oneness with the Self and the recognition of the same Self dwelling in everyone comes after the Yogi follows many steps. First, he has to control his senses, then he meditates and practices witness consciousness and finally he taps the source of Truth and then proceeds to become identified with it. Once he reaches the final state negative emotions do not touch him and he rises above all duality and resides in the Eternal state of Satchidanand.

Ekknath: The promise of eternal life is the mystic's message and for this the experience of Samadhi is necessary. The conscious mind is full of desires, and it is the mind that experiences past present future- the dimension of time and

therefore space. In samadhi one withdraws one's consciousness into the deep unconscious aspect where there is no mind hence no time or sensory experience. This requires untiring effort but yet cannot be achieved without Grace of the Guru; as it would entail the death of the ego - which is like expecting to lift oneself up with one's bootstraps- willy-nilly impossible. The experience of Samadhi is like the experience of death, for the personality does not exist but, awareness does exist and hence when one returns from samadhi he is able to report the same. If one loves a Guru deeply, at the moment of death this channel of love can be used by the Guru to guide one and remove the terror of death. After the experience of Samadhi the ego does not return and has no sway over even the conscious mind which now works only to benefit all humanity.

It always surprised me to read that Shri Krishna reiterates that the Yogi who is identified with the Self treats a stone or human alike and so every time I've felt- oh this cannot or rather should not happen. Imagine my audacity. However, yesterday as I listened to Swami Nikhilanand - he clarified what is meant- he said- just like you or me- the stone also exists, the mountain also exists the ocean also exists. And one of the characteristics of Brahman is EXISTENCE! So the yogi who has identified with Brahman- feels identified with ALL there IS and thus craving and grief leave him as a snake leaves its skin. Being Brahman (Consciousness) he is filled with Bliss (cheer)!

If you are a qualified student and have access to the scriptures and teacher, enlightenment is inevitable, but if there is a lack of adhikaritam then.... If the twigs are wet yet they dry with the fire of knowledge! Verse 54 introduces the subject of being enlightened- **once the firelit match touches the dry twigs and the fire is lit- what twigs, what match?** The enlightened one is Brahma Bhutah, prasannatma, na kankshati, and sees divinity in all beings- sarveshu bhuteshu, and attains param bhakti – this pertains to the four types of Bhakti [sh. 16- dis. 7]- aarta, artharti, jigyasu and finally the bhakti of jnanis.

Jnanis endowed with paraa bhakti

For example, the following:

1. Sanat Kumar, Sanatana Kumar, Sanak Kumar, Sanandan Kumar - born Jnanis visited Vaikuntha and the fragrance of the Tulsi, sent them into divine ecstasy, and they became worshippers of the Lord. *In Sat yuga.*

2. Janak in *Treta Yuga*- on seeing Shri Ram.

3. *Dwapar yuga*- Shukadev the son of Veda Vyasa. The story goes that Shukadev did not emerge from his mother's womb, for 12 years fearing Maayaa would get hold of him. Until one day Narad came and whispered into his mother's ears that Maya would have no hold on him. He emerged from the womb, expanded himself to the age of a twelve year old, and went into the forest and sat in Samadhi, when years later the students of Veda Vyasa discovered him. Vyasa told them to whisper one shloka into his ear, which described the beauty of Lord Krishna decorated with a peacock feather, wearing a mala of Vijayanti beads, his flute and so on.... Shukadev got so enchanted by the beauty of Lord Krishna, that he then recited the Bhagvat Puran to King Parikshit.

4. Finally in *Kaliyuga*- many are unaware that Shankaracharya, widely acknowledged as a param jnani and the one who propounded Advaita Vedanta, sang the glories of Lord Krishna, Ma Durga and Dakshinেশ্বর from the age 20 till he left his body at age 32.

Shankara: **Shlokas 55-60**: By Bhakti, he knows Me as I am in the diverse manifestations. He knows I am devoid of all the differences caused by upadhis, that I am supreme Purusha non-dual, Chaitanya [consciousness] pure, simple, unborn, undying, fearless, knowing Me in truth he enters into Myself immediately.⁵⁷ Doing all actions whoso seeks refuge in Me, Vasudeva, the Lord, with his whole self, centred in Me reaches the eternal, Abode of Vishnu by the Grace of the Lord. Mentally resigning all deeds to Me and fixing the heart in Me thou shalt cross over all difficulties. Once again Karma yoga is highlighted- the three aspects being:

1. Do all actions with the Buddhi fixed in Me [the attitude is the point na mama sarvam ishwara- not mine, all is Ishwara, bhakti in all action]. 2. Renounce the fruit of all actions to the Karmaphala daataa, [the giver of the fruit of action] for the Karta is merely an agent of action and 3. Gratitude- Do not be attached to inaction. Shloka 58: If from egotism thou wilt not hear Me thou shalt perish. Shloka 59: Thy very own Nature will constrain you to fight- [kshatriya] We are all bound by our nature- svabhavo durya kramah.

Shloka 61:

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।

भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥ 61॥

Arjuna, God abides in the heart of all creatures causing them to revolve according to their karma by His illusive power(Maya) as though mounted on a machine.

Shloka 62:

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।

तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥ 62॥

Take refuge in Him alone with all your being, Arjuna. By His mere Grace you will attain supreme peace and the eternal abode.

Eknathji likens the course of a Jiva thus- he says you are the potter, the wheel is karma, which is spinning, and the clay is your person which you mould. When the pot is a little asymmetrical- plenty of clay is available you can start again. The clay and the spinning, goes on till desire is extinguished. No more clay. For a while the momentum of the wheel makes it continue to rotate, but nothing can surmount it and the Mind is still. This stillness is that of profound peace. Yet it is not samadhi. For Samadhi one waits patiently, quietly, and when the Lord / the Guru deems fit, he swoops down and takes the ego out of you! To get even a few moments of such an experience, one becomes willing to give up all sensual pleasure and submit to any rigour. All one really needs to do is “Run to Him for refuge with all your strength, and peace profound will be yours by His grace” This is not running away, it is running home. Eknath goes on to encourage us saying don’t buy clay, even if on sale and if you have clay don’t spin it, i.e. don’t brood over any desires or fantasise - this being the habit pattern of many years, or else you will have lost any gain towards home.

Sri Krishna has repeatedly told us that He resides in the heart of all. We tend to judge and identify with the personality, and often feel surely, Sri Krishna does not dwell in this one, in that one. He dwells in me no doubt! This happens by the power of Maaya, who casts a spell over us and being mesmerised we look only outwards- Bahirmukhi where our senses drag us. Isn’t that strange? Now He tells Arjuna to take refuge in Him- who dwells in his heart - become Antarmukhi- just turn inwards, and what a kingdom of heaven we shall discover. No outside happening which creates a turmoil within will ever disturb us for we have surrendered totally to His will, so whatever happens- howsoever seemingly distressing has no power over us.

Shankara: Ishvara the Ruler, Arjuna- pure internal self [antahkaran] the word Arjuna is used in the sense of 'pure,' in the Rig Veda, "the dark day and the light day"[6-9-1] The Lord causes all beings to revolve as if mounted on machines, like wooden dolls on a machine, by Maaya by causing illusion.

If we are like wooden dolls mounted on a machine and spin due to Maaya – where comes the free will? And what then is the purpose of sadhana? These questions would surely arise in any thinking mind. Shri Krishna here is explaining the modus operandi of creation.

In the first half of the shloka He states that every living Being [and the Universe] is pervaded by Him Let us see in what manner:

1. Every atom in the Universe emanates from him like the dream and the dreamer.
2. The Intelligence that governs this Universe- also known as Laws of Nature, even in our own body a natural intelligence, conducts all functions, the platelets know exactly where to go in an injury to stop the bleeding, the Hb. Molecule carries exactly 16 molecules of oxygen to be delivered to the cells. How? Thus the intelligence at work in every form is the Lord, and finally,
3. As the Awareness/Consciousness that witnesses all of this phenomenal Universe!

Therefore, that which is like a machine is our physical and subtle and causal body while the Chaitanya Saakshi- Shri Krishna abides in us as Consciousness. **That which we call ourself, as ourself is indeed a machine mounted on Shri Krishna and revolves, due to the momentum of Karma, which is a law laid down by Ishvara, and applies because we identify with it!** This then is the divine Maaya at work. In that it is a law, **it becomes inevitable that the machine itself has no free will-** it will move in the direction Karma takes it. **However, the Lord that resides within has all the powers- Icchaa Shakti, Kriya Shakti and Jnana Shakti- this is the reason the EGO experiences, as it is intimately connected to this Chaitanya Saakshi [Shri Krishna], ego does not have the power perse, this, enables the ego make a choice, between the gunas, trying to develop sattva, to the extent that will lead it to seek liberation.**

The story that Shri Ramakrishna tells us comes to mind. Once a traveller was crossing a forest and he was apprehended by three robbers- after looting him the first one said let's just kill him, the second said, there was no need for that let's tie him to the tree, so he cannot escape and so this was done. A while later the third robber came untied the traveller and led him out of the forest. The grateful traveller requested him to accompany him to his home which the robber refused, and said this is only as far as I can go! The first robber is Tamoguna, the second is Rajo and the third is Sattva. Even Sattvaguna has no place beyond Maaya, hence ONLY THE GRACE OF SHRI KRISHNA can take us home.

Shloka 63

ति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं मया ।
विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥ 63 ॥

Thus, has this wisdom, the most profound secret of all secret knowledge, been imparted to you by Me; deeply pondering over it, now do as you like.

Swami Rama: Shri Krishna is pointing to the Truth that the Lord dwells equally in the heart of each and everyone but mere knowing this does not change anything. The aspirant has to tread the path shown by his Guru, experiment, experience, practice and realise for himself. This requires courage and persistence. If one has not realised the Self, he still remains in the grip of Prakruti and the gunas, and he gets propelled by them like a puppet. The Guru completes his commitment when he systematically shows the way, but he cannot command the student, who must use his free will to walk the path. Shri Krishna is telling Arjuna the secret of secrets, and then asks him, to decide for himself his further step.

Eknath: The words 'guhyat guhyatamam' indicate the secret of secrets- which has been revealed to Arjuna. A copy of the Gita is available for less than the price of a sandwich- and it is there for all to read, but until an experienced teacher explains it - the secret will remain a secret. After that Sri Krishna says, yetheccha tat kuru- do what you like. There is no order, threat or rigid rule that Arjuna is bidden to obey. This is the beauty of the Gita - total respect for you. Now you do what you like. You have been explained what is beneficial what is harmful, what is health what is illness, what is love what is hate- now you

choose. Like the music maestro - who uses Dhvani to convey - the beyond-playing a few notes he expects you to complete the melody as you like. This requires training and the ear, to catch the meaning. Kalidas a great sanskrit poet used this a lot - he has said - 'and then the sun of love set' - this generally left the young girls sad, when I pointed it out to them, that the sun will rise again their eyes lit up. That is Dhvani. The Guru leaves it to us to follow for he has respect, trust and love.

The secret knowledge is laid before us like an open book. What then is secret? Secret is the understanding that comes only with His Grace. Words have meaning, but they don't appeal to us, till such time as we are not inspired by the Lord to take note. Therefore, one could question- if all is only His Grace, what is my role in sadhana if any? Good question. Our role is only to turn our ear towards what Shri Krishna is saying- which means first to hear and then to listen. The very first aspect of Bhakti is shravanam- to listen. The Navaratnamalika (garland of nine gems), nine forms of bhakti are listed: (1) śravaṇa (listening to ancient texts), (2) kīrtana (praying), (3) smaraṇa (remembering teachings in ancient texts), (4) pāda-sevana (service to the feet), (5) archana (worshiping), (6) namaskar or vandana (bowing to the divine), (7) dāsyā (serving the Lord as a master) (8) Sakhayatamata- make Him your friend and (9) Atmanivedan- surrender yourself to Him.

So here Shri Krishna is asking Arjuna to do Atmanivedan- for now he has heard the secret of secrets- of how to be free from the bondage of karma. And then, there is always a, 'and then,' for the decision is always your own to follow or not to follow. No Guru not even God would force a decision on us, for that is our domain, when I say that I mean, such is the Shrushti (creation) itself - so unless we decide to turn inwards, we cannot be made to do so. **Once the decision is made all the Universe will come to our aid and of course, we would have opened the gate of Grace to flood our very Being.**

Shloka 65:

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥ 65 ॥

Give your mind to Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me, and bow to Me. Doing so, you will come to Me alone, I truly promise you; for, you are exceptionally dear to Me.

Shloka 66:

सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।

अहं त्वां सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥ 66 ॥

Resigning all your duties to Me, be all powerful and all supporting Lord, take refuge in Me alone; I shall absolve you of all sins, worry not.

Swami Rama: Has taken both the shlokas together. He speaks from his own experience, as he goes on to say that the love a Guru has for his disciple, cannot compare with any other on earth. The Guru wants to shower his grace, such that all he is, is imparted to the disciple. **The secret of secrets - Forsake all your religious attachments and concepts come, take refuge in Me and all your sins will dissolve.** This is a call to renounce everything for attaining the highest goal of life. Suppose one renounces one's home for the attainment of the Lord- he is bound to suffer the consequences, but here the Lord assures him, that no such fear should assail Arjuna. Now a serious question arises, that right at the start Arjuna was anxious to renounce the world, to avoid the disasters of war, and at that time Shri Krishna insisted he fight the war, and now he asks Arjuna to renounce. This is because at that time Arjuna was deluded, and wanted to escape his responsibilities, his intellect was clouded with attachment and ignorance. Now he knows the difference, of renunciation done with vivek (discrimination) and that, taken under the sway of pseudo- compassion. Besides, even now Shri Krishna asks him to do his duty, and renounce only the fruits of whatever action he undertakes.

Eknath: 'Abandon all supports' is Shri Krishna's injunction. (Come, take refuge in Me and I shall purify you from all sin). This is the most difficult task for we are conditioned to have a balanced portfolio- invest in manifold ways to safeguard against-flat inflation, runaway inflation, deflation, depression, "stagflation" even chaos! This might work for money says Shri Krishna but when you desire to come to Me, you must abandon all other supports- **and suppose it doesn't work- He smilingly says- "you lose." Are you ready? The real lover of God says, "I take it all."**

The mind is so conditioned however, over many lifetimes to grasp (e.g. Babinski reflex) that **extreme effort or intense faith**, would be required to let go. One reaches such a stage where even after giving up the shore of mundane existence one feels stranded in mid ocean, with no shore in sight and that is the greatest test an aspirant undergoes, before help arrives from the source within! When you give yourself like this to Me, I will remove every sin from you. To reach this stage one has to give up every selfish desire and the mind is to be totally still.

For the last time Shri Krishna tells Arjuna to take refuge in Him. There is an apt saying “sab kuch tera- mein bhi tera, - bas tu ek mera” So if we can truly say that, what is there to be afraid of? When He is ours and we keep nothing back from Him -we have even surrendered our own existence to Him- can we be afraid of anything at all? In case we are - it should warn us that we have not surrendered. Shri Krishna is asking Arjuna to do just this - and then our virtues or our sins become His responsibility. We have nothing to lose except our ignorance and bondage.

Shankara: When thou art firm in faith, I shall liberate thee from all sins, from all bonds of dharma, and a-dharma, by manifesting Myself as thy own Self- seek me as Thy sole refuge.

Shankara: Has given the entire Vedantic Advaita point of view about the Self and the knowledge that removes Avidya. Vide. Notes only briefly mentioned therein.

Shloka 67: This teaching should not be taught to him who is jealous of the Lord, and if he is not devoted. It should be taught to the devoted, one who renders service to the Guru.

Shloka 68: The merit of teaching this doctrine. The one who teaches this doctrine shall doubtless come to Me.

Shankara: There is indeed no one dearer to the Lord, He has said so even earlier as the Jnani is One with Him and knows no separation from even His

manifestation. Shankara quotes the following 2 verses regarding this knowledge.

श्रेयान्द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञाज्ज्ञानयज्ञः परन्तप ।

सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥ 33 ॥ Ch.4

Arjuna sacrifice through knowledge, is superior to sacrifice performed with material things. For all actions without exception culminate in Knowledge. O son of Kunti.

The yajna that is dearest to the Lord is the Yajna of Knowledge and when we study or teach the BG we are doing just that no wonder it is dear to Him and we shall doubtless reach Him.

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।

प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥ 17 ॥ Ch.7

Amongst these, I consider them to be the highest, who worship Me with knowledge, and are steadfastly and exclusively devoted to Me. I am very dear to them, and they are very dear to Me.

Shri Krishna has always told us the highest sacrifice is the Jnana Yajna.

Shloka 72:

कच्चिदेतच्छ्रुतं पार्थ त्वयैकाग्र्येण चेतसा ।

कच्चिदज्ञानसम्मोहः प्रनष्टस्ते धनञ्जय ॥ 72 ॥

Have you, O Arjuna, heard this gospel of the Gita attentively? And has your delusion born of ignorance been destroyed, O Dhananjaya, conqueror of riches?

Shloka 73:

अर्जुन उवाच ।

नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत ।

स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥ 73 ॥

Arjuna said: Krishna, by your grace my delusion has been destroyed and I have gained wisdom. I am free if all doubt. I will do your bidding.

Swami Rama: Throughout the Bhagvad Gita it is Arjuna who asks the question and for the first time Sri Krishna has asked him whether his delusion has been dispelled by the teaching and guidance given? This is in answer to that question. Arjuna replies that all his doubts have been cleared, that he has regained his consciousness of his true nature, and thus he will fight with all his might. He will perform his duties without attachment and selflessly and skilfully. Now being established in the Self he has become aware of the Self, in that eternal element which cannot be killed. He has surrendered completely at the feet of the Lord and is willing whole heartedly to follow Sri Krishna.

Eknath: Arjuna's will is undivided now. He is aligned to divine will, and he is willing to fight. The end of the dialogue of the Bhagvad Gita has been reached. The Gita has given us two watch words- FIGHT and FAITH. Fight all the negativities within and get over the ego and have faith that Sri Krishna will carry you across. Arjuna says "I have regained my memory; I remember who I am." He wondered 'how could I have forgotten?' When anyone of us suffer from amnesia, our friends remind us of many incidents to help us regain our memory. Here we are suffering from a rather prolonged amnesia. Arjuna is at his full stature now ready for the fight, to do his duty and to surrender. This the Upanishads say- leads us from the unreal to the real, from darkness to light, from death to immortality.

The fact that Arjuna says- he has got his memory back- it seems as though we are all in a state of forgetfulness of our true nature. It brings to mind the story of Narada who once asked Shri Vishnu - what is Maya? and Shri Vishnu replied, he would answer after having a glass of water. Narada rushed to fetch Him water as there was a river nearby- when he reached the shore he saw a beautiful maiden stranded midstream, he went to help her, settled down and married her. One morning as one of his children was drowning, he called out in desperation to Mahavishnu and who should he see? Shri Vishnu standing still waiting for his glass of water, when years had passed! He was shocked into the sudden realisation that he had come to fetch a glass of water for Shri Vishnu! He now knew what Maya was! So Arjuna saying he had got his memory back seems very apt indeed! May we surrender totally at His lotus feet, and may all Beings awaken to eternal life.

Shankara: Shloka 72: The Lord now asks with a desire to know whether the pupil has understood or not the shastra, the object of the question being that He might make the pupil understand the teaching by some other means, if the latter be found to have not understood it. And this is to show that it is the duty of the teacher to try again to make the pupil understand the teaching and enable him to attain his object. Shri Krishna wants to know if the delusion of ignorance been destroyed. The destruction of ignorance was the object of this teaching.

Shloka 73: Delusion: born of ignorance, the cause of the whole evil of samsara, hard to cross like the ocean, has been destroyed. I have sought Thy Grace. Recognition: of the true nature of the Self. When this recognition is obtained, then will all ties of the heart be loosened. This questioning and answering about the destruction of delusion, shows conclusively what the purpose of the knowledge of the teaching, of the whole shastra is, namely, the destruction of delusion and the attainment of the recognition of the Self. 'I am firm' says Arjuna, "in Thy command to do Thy word" meaning to say, "Through Thy Grace I have achieved the end of life; I have naught to do."

Shloka 74

सञ्जय उवाच ।

इत्यहं वासुदेवस्य पार्थस्य च महात्मनः ।

संवादमिममश्रौषमद्भुतं रोमहर्षणम् ॥ 74 ॥

Sanjay said: Thus I heard the mysterious and thrilling conversation between Shri Krishna and the high-souled Arjuna, son of Kunti.

Shloka 77

तच्च संस्मृत्य संस्मृत्य रूपमत्यद्भुतं हरेः ।

विस्मयो मे महानराजन्हृष्यामि च पुनः पुनः ॥ 77 ॥

Remembering also, again and again, that most wonderful form of Shri Krishna, great is my wonder and I am thrilled over and over again.

Shloka 78

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।
तत्र श्रीविजयो भूतिधुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥ 78 ॥

Wherever there is Bhagawan Shri Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and wherever there is Arjuna, the wielder of the Gandiva bow, goodness, victory, glory and unfailing righteousness will surely be there; such is my conviction.

Shankara: Sanjaya extols Shri Krishna. Shlokas 74-78. Not much to comment on.

*Notes from Shankara Bhasya on the Bhagvad Gita which are illuminating in themselves:

Pure Self- knowledge **alone** is the means to the Highest Bliss; for, as removing the notion of variety, it culminates in liberation [kaivalya]. Avidya is the perception of variety involving actions, factors of action, and the ends of actions. It is always present in the Self. “Mine is action; I am the agent; I do this act for such and such a result;” in this form, avidya has been active in time without a beginning. The remover of this avidya is the knowledge of the Self arising in the following form, “Here I am, free, a non-agent, actionless, devoid of results”; for such a knowledge removes the notion of variety which causes one to engage in action. The word “**alone**” [in the opening line of this paragraph] is intended to exclude the two other alternatives: neither by works alone, nor by works and intellectual knowledge conjoined together, is the Highest Bliss attained. Moreover, the Highest Bliss is not an effect to be accomplished by action, works cannot be the means to it. Indeed, the Eternal Reality is not produced either by knowledge or by works. **Only by removing Avidya** does knowledge emancipate, e.g. as in the case of a rope mistaken for a serpent, is suddenly revealed to be rope on bringing the lamp – the light of which removed the darkness and truth was revealed similarly knowledge removes the ignorance- Avidya.

Karma cannot lead to liberation for any action produces a result – so – the body is essential to experience this result hence even if punya karma is performed a body will have to be taken to experience the results. It can only lead to purification of the manas and Buddhi hence Karma yoga is essential and should be practiced by the unenlightened. Action is a creature of Avidya [dwell on this

– it will have a result which will have to be experienced hence only Knowledge can remove ignorance.]

Summary: *In this the concluding discourse Shri Krishna knows He has dispelled the despondency, and the darkness of ignorance that Arjuna was affected by, yet He asks Arjuna if he has listened to Him attentively, and absorbed the Knowledge imparted. The discourse begins with Arjuna asking the difference between Tyaaga [renunciation of selected actions] and Sanyasa [renunciation of every action]. Shri Krishna elaborates on it by explaining in detail what is meant by the three different types of tyaga i.e. the sattvic, rajasic and tamasic. Shri Krishna then goes on to define what it is that is involved in an action, what are the types of knowledge, intellect, resolve or firmness, and what is the type of joy derived, from the sattvik, rajasic and tamasic gunas in each. Further, Shri Krishna gives us the characteristics of a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Sudra classified according to their Gunas. And once again, emphasizes the need to act according to one's Dharma [Svadharmya-allotted duty] even if that duty was tainted by some impurity for no action is totally pure. Shri Krishna explains how this is to be done. Shri Krishna then describes all the qualities possessed by the Jnana yogi who has attained true sanyasa having reached Brahman. The way of action can also lead to liberation when it is undertaken by total surrender and the intense conviction that the disciple/devotee is asked to have for Shri Krishna, upon which he will be absolved of all sin. The discourse now ends with the warning that this knowledge should not be given to the unworthy, sceptic. The devotee who imparts this knowledge to others is the one dearest to Shri Krishna on the entire globe. Finally, Shri Krishna asks Arjuna whether his doubts and dejection are dispelled? Arjuna answers that he has regained his memory [of who he truly is] and is willing to do Shri Krishna's bidding with his whole heart. We then hear Sanjay extolling the dialogue between the Lord and Arjuna and it leaves us as thrilled as Sanjay.*

It feels as though we could go on listening to Shri Krishna forever. To conclude is in fact to begin once again for is it not all a circle? - Beginningless and endless-anaadi anant. Beloved Bhagwan like the ultimate Engineer has laid bare the mechanics of creation

Throughout the text the names of Swami Rama and Eknath Easwaran have been kept, with deep reverence. It is as though they are hand-holding us

through this journey from darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. It was none other than Kabir who said 'Guru Govind dono khade kiske lagu pay? Balihari Guru aapki jine Govind diyo milaye! {Both the Guru and God are before me, whom should I pay my obeisance to first? The Guru, for it is his benediction that I could behold God} My sashtang namaskras to them both and also Shri Shankara and the contemporary Gurus Swami Nikhilanand Swami Tadattmanand and Swami Sarvapriyanand

Reflection and Exercises:

1. What is the difference between Sanyas and Tyaga. Why does Arjuna have this doubt?
2. Who is the karta?
3. Comment on Shloka 14.
4. What are the four Purusharthas?
5. Debate on: 'Rajasic karma' is mandatory.
6. Enumerate the types of Happiness
7. What are the characteristics of the Brahmin, Kshatriya and the Vaishyas and Sudras.
8. What is Svadharma? Can it lead to Moksha?
9. Debate: Man has free will.
10. What is phalashruti.
11. Summarise your understanding of this discourse.

Kindly refer to essay on **Free Will** in the book on **Essays on Ancient Wisdom** available on the same website.

Vichar Vimarsh - [Discussions of some topics]

1. What is Atma?

SatchitAnanda

Once while I was attending a Gurukul lecture by Swami Veda, I was very tempted to answer this question and promptly put my hand up. Swamiji indulgent as he was, gave me the nod- and I answered quoting the sh. 42 of ch. 3

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥ 42 ॥

The senses are said to be greater than the body; greater than the senses is mind. Greater than the mind is intellect; and what is greater than the intellect is He, the Self.

Repeating yo buddhe parasastu saha- the one beyond the intellect. He shook his head. A young sanyasi at the back replied- ‘the sense “I AM”’. Swamiji smiled at him, looking sternly at me he remarked “we don’t just teach theory here!”

Be that as it may I am going to explain -this sense “I Am”. No one can deny they exist. If someone says he/she does not exist – it only proves he/she does. Therefore, the sense I Am is inherent in us all – not only that it is also SELF EVIDENT. IF “I AM” I also know that I Am therefore, it is Self-evident- Svaprakashita. This indicates the eternal definition – Sat and Chit. I exist and I know that I exist. Now then. What about Ananda?

Ananda is possible only if there are no limitations- another word is Ananta. That means there is no lack of any kind, there is no limitation of any kind, hence I do not desire anything and therefore have no struggle.

If we abide in the definition of Sat and Chit we automatically gain Ananda, but we don’t. We impose limitations on ourselves – such as , ‘I am a woman, I am married, I have children, I am a doctor’ and so on. It is clear- If I am a doctor, I

cannot be an architect, if I am a woman, I cannot be a man, if I am married no one else is available now for me to marry; these limitations are termed Upadhis. Notice also that all these qualifications – limitations- conditionings, Upadhis relate to the body/mind. It is the gender of the body, the profession, the marital status all pertaining to the body.

The journey therefore, entails my return from “me[ego- separate self]” to “I Am” alone. That is all, then I know my true nature and am free **from the Upadhis which are due to ignorance**. That is MUKTI **from the ego not of the ego**.

Small note while studying Vakyavrutti: The best definition of Aatma is – Anubhava maatra param Brahma – not the experience but only that which makes it possible is Parambrahma. The word Avadharaya- hold it in your intellect-niddhidhyasana

2. What is subtle body?

According to Vedanta, an individual self is composed of three bodies. - Gross body, subtle body, causal body.

Subtle body. Subtle body has 19 components.

Five sense organs of knowledge or sense capabilities.(jnanendriyas).

This refers to the subtle power of the sense organs (and not the physical organs, eyes, ears, etcetera of the physical body) . They are seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling.

5 organs of action or action capacities. Karmendriyas,;- speaking, grasping, moving, excreting , procreating.

5 Pranas. Life forces, Pranas are responsible for the health and vitality of the body.

These are

- 1.Prana.The respiratory function of inhalation and exhalation.
2. Apana. responsible for waste removal from the body, reproduction.

3. Vyana. responsible for circulation of blood, oxygen, nutrients, and movement.
4. Samana. Responsible for digestion and assimilation of food
5. Udana. Responsible for speech, growth, Nervous system, also activated while dying.

Antahkaran:- the inner instrument -manas, buddhi, chitta and ahankara

1. Mind. (Manas) It integrates all sensory perceptions that are received from the various indriyas and are passed on to the intellect. All vrittis[modifications] take place in the mind. It also sends instructions to the various indriyas. Doubts also arise here.
2. Intellect (Buddhi) Rational thinking, Reasoning, Judging, Decision making takes place here.
- 3 Memory. (Chitta) It records all the experiences, perceptions etc and stores them. Both Conscious and unconscious memories are revived from here.
4. Ego, (Ahamkara) it appropriates all actions, happenings taking place and takes ownership saying that " I " do.

It is through the subtle body all experiences happen. Pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, our behaviour towards the outer world is all because of what is happening inside us. The subtle body is even active in our dreams. Even when the gross body is at rest, the mind is active and can create worlds, sensations, movements- in the dream world.

Can you experience it?

Yes. All experiences are happening inside.

If the gross body is the hardware, the subtle body is the software and consciousness is the electricity.

In the waking state, we experience the gross body and the subtle body illuminated by consciousness.

In the dream state, we experience the subtle body illuminated by consciousness as the mind is still working.

In the deep sleep state, only the causal body is there because the senses and mind shut down. Consciousness illuminates the absence of any experience

and one feels deeply rested after waking up when the mind and ego start working again.

3. How many questions has Arjuna asked in the Bhagavad Gita?

If we consider the direct questions asked by Arjuna to Krishna, then the questions are 26 in number. Scholars like Swami Ranganathananda and Sri Aurobindo note 50–60 inquiries, as Arjuna often asks multiple questions in a single verse. These questions are the basis for the entire Bhagavad Gita spanning various topics from the nature of duty and the self to the path to spiritual liberation.

Chapter ! [36,37]	<p>निहत धार्तराष्ट्रान्नः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन । पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान्हत्वैतानाततायिनः ॥ 36 ॥ तस्मान्नार्हा वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान्स्वबान्धवान् । स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥ 37 ॥</p>	<p>How can I fight against my own family? Isn't killing them sinful?" What good is victory soaked in the blood of my loved ones?</p> <p>Moral dilemma, confusion and compassion</p>
Chapter 2 (4 & 7)	<p>कथं भीष्ममहं सङ्ख्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन । इषुभिः प्रतियोत्स्यामि पूजार्हावरिसूदन ॥ 4 ॥ कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसम्मूढचेताः । यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे</p>	<p>Continuing in the same vein and finally surrendering to Shri Krishna and the Bhagavad Gita teaching begins.</p>

	शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥ 7॥	
Chapter 2(54)	स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव । स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत् ब्रजेत किम् ॥ 54॥	Asking the signs of a Self realised person(questions of maturity) Sthithapragna lakshanani)
Chapter 3 (1&2)	ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन । तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥ 1॥ व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे । तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥ 2॥	Confusion between karma and gnana and wants a definite answer from Shri Krishna (still trying to escape the fighting)
Chapter 3 (36)	अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः । अनिच्छन्नपि वार्ष्णेय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥	What's the motivation behind sin? Basically a question about desire.
Chapter 4 (4)	अपरं भवतो जन्म परं जन्म विवस्वतः । कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वमादौ प्रोक्तवानिति ॥ 4॥	Curious question about Shri Krishna's antiquity and perhaps a leading question about Avatara

Chapter 5(1)	<p>संन्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि । यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ॥ 1॥</p>	<p>What's better? Renunciation or Duty? This question is about path clarity</p>
Chapter 6 (33 & 34)	<p>योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन । एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात्स्थितिं स्थिराम् 33 चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम् । तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥ 34</p>	<p>Arjuna is pondering that Atma Samyama yoga is difficult as the mind is very powerful and difficult to control</p>
Chapter 6 (37&38)	<p>अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतो योगाच्चलितमानसः । अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति । कच्चिन्नोभयविभ्रष्टश्छिन्नाभ्रमिव नश्यति । अप्रतिष्ठो महाबाहो विमूढो ब्रह्मणः पथि ॥ 38॥</p>	<p>What's the consequence of a failed spiritual seeker? A seeker who has given up material pursuits and yet has failed in realising. Fear of failure in the spiritual path.</p>
Chapter 8 (1 & 2)	<p>किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम । अधिभूतं च किं प्रोक्तमधिदैवं किमुच्यते ॥ 1॥</p>	<p>Following the lead of Shri Krishna, Arjuna wants to know the meaning of terms like Brahman, Karma</p>

	<p>अधियज्ञः कथं कोऽत्र देहेऽस्मिन्मधुसूदन । प्रयाणकाले च कथं ज्ञेयोऽसि नियतात्मभिः ॥ 2॥</p>	<p>Adyatmam, Adidaivam, Adibhutam, Adiyagyam. Question about the indweller. How is He to be known at death time by the Realised one?</p>
<p>Chapter 10 (17-18)</p>	<p>कथं विद्यामहं योगिंस्त्वां सदा परिचिन्तयन् । केषु केषु च भावेषु चिन्त्योऽसि भगवन्मया ॥</p> <p>विस्तरेणात्मनो योगं विभूतिं च जनार्दन । भूयः कथय तृप्तिर्हि शृण्वतो नास्ति मेऽमृतम् ॥ 18॥</p>	<p>Arjuna has some comprehension as to Who Shri Krishna is and now wants to know the Lord's Vibhutis or grand manifestations to meditate upon. He makes some beautiful statements to this effect and wants to rejoice the Lord in his Vibhutis</p>
<p>Chapter 11 (4)</p>	<p>मन्यसे यदि तच्छक्यं मया द्रष्टुमिति प्रभो । योगेश्वर ततो मे त्वं दर्शयात्मानमव्ययम् ॥ 4॥</p>	<p>Arjuna expresses his desire to see the Lord in His entirety (Virat Rupa) He is now fully realised and wants to have Direct experience of the Lord 🙏</p>
<p>(31)</p>	<p>आख्याहि मे को भवानुग्रूपो नमोऽस्तु ते देववर प्रसीद । विज्ञातुमिच्छामि भवन्तमाद्यं न हि प्रजानामि तव प्रवृत्तिम् ॥ 31॥</p>	<p>Terrified by the Virata Rupa Arjuna asks” who are you? /what are your intentions?”</p> <p>This leads to Krishna revealing that He is the mighty Kala- which</p>

		signifies not only TIME but Death.
Chapter 11 (43)	किरीटिनं गदिनं चक्रहस्त- मिच्छामि त्वां द्रष्टुमहं तथैव । तेनैव रूपेण चतुर्भुजेन सहस्रबाहो भव विश्वमूर्ते ॥ 46॥	Arjuna wishes to see the Soumya swarupa of the four armed Shri Vishnu after having experienced the fearsome cosmic form of the Lord. This is not a question perse but a request or prayer 🙏
Chapter 12 (1)	एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते । ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥ 1॥	This is a question about Saguna and Nirguna worshippers as if confirming Lord as both Nirguna and Saguna (Transcendent and Immanent).
Chapter 13 (1)	प्रकृतिं पुरुषं चैव क्षेत्रं क्षेत्रज्ञमेव च । एतद्वेदितुमिच्छामि ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं च केशव ।	This question is about Kshetra and Kshetragna.(This question was not in original text and was apparently added at a later time)
Chapter 14 (21)	कैर्लिङ्गैस्त्रीन्गुणानेतानतीतो भवति प्रभो । किमाचारः कथं चैतांस्त्रीन्गुणानतिवर्तते ॥ 21	This question is about Gunanita. Conduct of a person who has transcended the Gunas and how does one attain that stage?

Chapter 17 (1)	ये शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य यजन्ते श्रद्धयान्विताः । तेषां निष्ठा तु का कृष्ण सत्त्वमाहो रजस्तमः ॥	This is a follow up to the last statement of the previous discourse about how one should follow the shastras. Arjuna wishes to know about Sraddha in relation to the three Gunas
Chapter 18 (1)	सन्न्यासस्य महाबाहो तत्त्वमिच्छामि वेदितुम् । त्यागस्य च हृषीकेश पृथक्केशिनिषूदन ॥ १॥	In this question Arjuna addresses Shri Krishna as Keshisudana(the slayer of kesi Rakshasa) perhaps it indicates that Arjuna wants the doubts in his mind about the difference between Sanyasa and Tyaga, be destroyed.

This study led me, to think over, the progression of his questions. And it slowly dawned on me, that these questions clearly fall into three categories, representing the three states of Arjuna's mind, namely doubt, afflicted and clarity. Arjuna looked up to Shri Krishna as the most valuable, trusted friend; at the beginning of the great war he did not look upon him as the total authority on the matters of conduct, war, duty etc. This represented the Kshipta and Moodha chittavrutti in the first adhyaya, in which he is much perturbed if there is really any merit in warring with kith and kin and respectable dear ones. The Sanskrit word Vikala[confusion, turmoil] reflects his state of mind. Self-doubt, uncertainty about the outcome of war, and mistaken point of view towards duty, make him utterly helpless.

His questions about what is a Sthitaprajna? why must one discharge duty if discerning right and wrong is more significant than any action? could there be any truth in accepting the claim that both he and his friend have undergone

many a births and deaths? what must one choose Knowledge or Action? if due to the fickleness of mind one desists from the right path, will his efforts towards understanding the mystery of life and death be wasted? He turns to his friend in utter desperation and seeks urgent help. All these questions represent the Aarta [afflicted] state of Bhakta.

Gradually his chitta bhumi {literally the ground of his mind} attains the next level of clearer, stabler understanding and his genuine inquiry begins. He becomes the Jigunyasu [anxious to know] bhakta. His approach becomes that of intellectual query. The questions he asks at this stage are esoteric ones.: what is Brahma? Adhyatma? what are the vibhutis? and what is the omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent Karta [doer]? Yet his chitta is full of vikshep and vikalpa [still confused]. It is engrossed in various questions.

After getting the Darshan of the Visvaroop [Beholding the Cosmic form of Shri Krishna] his query subsides. He asks for forgiveness for regarding Shri Krishna as just a great friend. Step by step a conviction takes hold of his mind that all his might, skills and power to think is empowered by Paramatma. He becomes humble.

And then he comes to the stage of the Jnani bhakta. Now he is in the receptive mode of mind. His doubts get clear, but some questions still linger in his mind. These are the questions about Trigunas, Nishtha, Sanyasa and Tyaga. His Niruddha [undisturbed] and Ekagra[one- pointed] chitta [mind] is now able to grasp the right answers and assimilate the highest wisdom. He has gained -Adhikaritam- worthiness. Thus, the persona of Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita represents the three types of Bhakta and the corresponding frames of his mind. In this way, the character of Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita beautifully embodies the progression of a devotee through all three levels of bhakti [Vikala- confused, Aarta-afflicted, and Jigyasu- ready to receive], each marked by a distinct inner disposition and growth of understanding.

4. Define the terms Kshetra-Kshetrajnya, Jnanam- Jneyam, Prakruti-Purusha, in chapter 13.

Kshetrajna

Pure Consciousness (Brahman) + Māyā = Ishwara (Brahman limited by Maya – only the Sattva Guna) In Ishwara, Maya is in its pure sattvic form.

As it descends, rajas and tamas emerge giving rise to mahat, buddhi, and the sense of individuality. At the individual (vyashti) level, Maya becomes Avidya - Ignorance. Through the upadhis of nama and rupa [name and form], it manifests as the ego (ahankara), falsely identifying itself as the knower (kshetrajna). However, the true Kṣetrajna the real knower of all fields or pure knowledge, is Pure Consciousness or Brahman .There is ultimately only One, but Maya creates the illusion of many.

The reflected consciousness (chidbhasa) illuminates the mind, while Pure Consciousness is merely Pure Awareness, untouched. The moment “I” arises, it is no longer Brahman It is the ego. By proximity to Brahman, the buddhi or ego claims knowership — this is adhyasa (superimposition), which must be removed by apavada (negation)

Kshetra

Everything else is the field. All that is perishable, Anitya belonging to material existence is what Shri Krishna refers to as the Kshetra. Body mind intellect complex, the emotions vasanas, samskaras, the subtle body and the casual or kaaran sharira is the field. Shri Krishna refers to the 5 gross elements, 5 subtle elements, ahankara, buddhi, manas, 5 jnanendriyas, and 5 karmendriyas Plus icha dvesha etc the emotional ingredients belonging to the mind. All the evolutes of Prakriti form the field or kshetra.

Jnanam

Shri Krishna enumerates the 20 qualities from shloka 8 to 12 as Jnanam. These qualities are not knowledge in the conventional sense but values and attitude to be cultivated for adhikaritam, that is to become eligible for the ultimate truth, Atma jnanam. They prepare the mind by removing impurities and make the buddhi subtle and quiet.

Jneyam : THAT which is to be Known is Brahman

The Absolute is beyond desh [space] kaala[time] and vastu[objects] It is neither sat (existent) nor asat (non-existent). It cannot be known through the senses like ordinary objects.

Jneyam is beyond sense perception . Among the six pramanas, it is known only through Shabda, that is revealed knowledge. All these descriptions can only indicate the truth referred to as तटस्थदृष्टिकोण.

Brahman— the Supreme Reality, the Imperishable, which is: Without beginning (अनादिम्) Beyond sat (existence) and asat (non-existence) All-pervading Subtler than the subtlest

Indivisible, Self-luminous. The indivisible jneya THAT is all pervading Awareness should be the highest goal in Spirituality, in other words knowing One's Own Nature.

Prakruti

The chart is given in the text which is elaborate and does not require explanation.

Purusha

Purusha is the Pure Consciousness that illumines all experience. It is also defined as the 'In-dweller' in the hearts of all Beings.

5. List the pairs of opposites given in the BG and give examples of how you can practise overcoming them.

Note on Pairs of opposites which need to be transcended to go beyond the Gunas: Shloka 34 Chapter 3. This is the shloka where Shri Krishna explains how to go beyond the three Gunas which compels us to act in a particular way and no extent of restraint would help The only way is to see through the building blocks of this samsara, which are also the pairs of opposites, the robbers on the path. So, we tried to list them and suggest ways to safeguard ourselves from these robbers.

Paryapta aparyapta- enough, not enough Ch 1 sh 10

Dharma Adharma right conduct, wrong conduct ch 18 sh 31
 Pravrutti Nivrutti right activity ,abstinence from activity sh 7 ch 16
 Satyam Asatyam real, unreal ch 16 sh 8
 Shraddhawan Sanshayatma – endowed with faith, doubting Tom sh 39 and 40
 ch 4
 Shubha Ashubha- auspicious, inauspicious sh 57 ch 2
 Jnyan ajnyan- knowledge and ignorance ch 14 sh 6 ch 4 sh 34
 Dukha Sukha - sorrow and happiness sh 55 ch 2
 Sukruta dushkruta- good, evil sh 50 ch 2
 Bandha mukta - bonded, free sh 51 ch 2
 Raag Dvesha - attraction and aversion sh 10 ch 4
 Bhaya abhaya - fear and fearless sh 10 ch 4
 Krodha shantah - anger and peace sh 10 ch 4
 Sankalpah asankalpah - thoughts and thought free ch 6 sh 4
 Laabha alaabha -gain and loss sh 38 ch 2
 Jayaa ajayu - victory and defeat sh 38 ch 2
 Sidhaa asidhao - Success and failure sh 22 ch 4
 Trupto – atrupto, vimatsara - Content and not content, envy sh 22 ch 4
 Shanti ashanti - peace agitation sh 66 ch 2
 Akirti – Kirti - ignominy – fame ch 2 sh 34
 Shitoshna – cold and heat Ch 6 sh 7
 Maana - apmana honour Dishonour Ch 6 sh 7
 Avibhakta Vibhakta - Undivided Divided Ch13 sh 16

To bring into daily life:

Raag and Dvesha Observe and become aware particularly of likes and dislikes-
 Raag and Dvesha – its easy, then check why? If justifiable notice and not
 react.

For jayaa jayu victory and defeat, laabha alaabhau gain and loss- equanimity
 and remembering all is transient helps.

Bandha and Mukta- Bondage and liberation, there are actions which bind and
 the same actions will not bind- if we ensure we are not attached to the result.

Shradha and Saunshaya- faith and doubt in daily life notice the inner milieu when one has faith and hold on to that, fix a time for meditation in the day stick to the same time- the mind will come home and stability will ensure faith.

Bhaya and Abhaya fear and fearlessness – there are two ways of becoming fearless- either keep total faith in the Lord and accept whatever comes our way and or – Know your true nature.

Krodha shantah – Anger -peace – to get over anger create a strategy either walk out of the situation, compose your mind and return or simply observe your breath.

Akirti -Kirti – ignominy- fame remember both are fleeting. Try never to do anything which will bring ignominy but when fame comes be careful not to be overwhelmed.

Maana apmaan -honour and dishonour- can be practised easily if one is content.

Shitoshna- Cold and hot – easy example- is use of AC or not ? To try to adjust to the requirements of others!

Avhibhakta- Vibhakta- Undivided divided – training one's attention and contemplating what is the underlying reality of this universe.

Bandha Mukta- Contemplate does desire bind or liberate

Trupto Atrupto- Knowing the true cause of discontent which is a feeling of lack [related to the BMI] one can remain content within, then there can be no cause for jealousy vimatsara.

Shanti Ashanti - there are times in life which make us anxious and worried and restless – persistent breath awareness is the key, as well as the knowledge that events are fixed our attitude to them is not. Developing the right attitude of acceptance will not only change the present and make it

more bearable it will change the future and the seeds of peace will be sown which will lead to our attaining to the truth. Surrender is another way- After all am I going to teach God what is good for me?

Sidha Asidhau- success and failure – is easy to deal with if we offer the fruit of all our actions at the feet of the Lord and note whether the action is for the benefit of all or only me.

Sankalpa – Asankalpa difficult to practise, first practise sankalpa by making firm resolutions and keeping them, then note what it is that is satisfied and proud of them and then let go.

Bhaya Abhaya- when I asked Swami Amarjyoti what was the cause of fear he had simply said- Hum kuchh apne liye bachaakar rakhna chahate hain isliye bhay lagata hai- so let go.

Sukruta Dushkruta – the way to discern good from bad action is mostly quite clear, however one more question before performing any action, will lead to liberation from suffering and that is is it for the general good?

Paryapta Aparyapta- good time to practise is at mealtimes – have I had enough to eat? Am I just being greedy?

Questions arising from the discussion:

How to appreciate oneness in the pair of the opposites, if we have not known the other?

Experience is based on subject / object and dvandvas so that is the matrix of sansaar. To recognise the unity in all one has to transcend this labelling and see things as they are. Usually our likes, dislikes, prejudices and biases cause a deviation in experience- we experience only what we want! Not what is!

Why would I want to be robotic?

This knowledge does not make us robotic in that we still experience duality only the swinging like a pendulum of attraction and aversion stops, and makes one still. A still lake reflects the landscape as it is whereas a lake undulating

with the wind the reflection is distorted. What would you like? A placid lake reflecting and absorbing the beauty of the universe or just pass through life and end having some turbulent experiences only to come back with more horrifying illusory ones.

6. How can an enlightened sage view friend and foe alike?

The following conversation seemed so apt so have put it in here, during our class last year.

4.5.20

Q Suhasini: Verse 9 disturbs me O Shirin.....how can anyone who knows someone is sinful be looked at with equanimity? eg some political people are so xxx....how can one be serene?

A. It is not about political people alone it is nearer home too.

Q Suhasini: if you have buddhi then you have to judge....right or wrong.....

Suhasini: how to apply buddhi to bad or evil people ????

A: Bheja fry mat karo aasan hai samajhna [do not do a brain fry its easy to understand]

Jisko tum sach samajhte ho vah to hai ek sapna [what you see as real is but a dream]

Kya sapne ko vapis ja kar theek karogi? [would you go correct a dream]

Yeh to vaham hai isko kaise mitaogi? [How will you erase a delusion?]

Poems aside remember: if wicked people say something that is true accept and change. If they say something that is false why take it to heart? Judge not and ye shall not be judged. No one, other than you suffers your judgement and opinions these are all labels. We act according to the level of our awareness at the time which is usually in the negative. It is said that sleeping nations fight wars and sleeping nations win them.

If we have to wake up, we can't be bothered with judging this one or that.

They are playing the role of villains you should admire the authenticity and withdraw. How well they fit into their roles, you even start hating them? 😏.

They are just another you. By the way you could never recognise a quality in someone else if you didn't have it yourself. So, look in and clean.

The sage has seen through the game therefore to him the one who is evil and the one who is virtuous is equal **as he sees only the Self in both. This is possible.**

The last line to complete the poem

Bheja fry mat karo aasan hai samajhna

Jisko tum sach samajhte ho vah to hai ek sapna

Kya sapne ko vapis ja kar theek karogi?

Yeh to vaham hai isko kaise mitaogi?

Bus jaag jao aur kya! [Just wake up what else?]

Q: Suhasini: then why fight? I thought you would have said.....say your piece.....and move on

A: Shirin: Haha 😄 that's not going to solve anything.

[3:44 PM, 5/4/2020] Shirin: You are compelled to act according to the gunas active at the time, and the level of consciousness in you. If you want to advance that level you will have to consider them your friends, they are helping you turn within to find the answer.

7. Enumerate the attitudes Shri Krishna has recommended for daily life.

Jnana: Mindfulness and becoming a witness and observe the fleeting nature of worldly emotions and experiences of the sense organs and objects and remaining detached and unaffected.

Attitude of Samam and dheeram because events are happening and we have no control over them.(2.14)

Equanimity in Happiness and Sadness Maintain a balanced and equanimous attitude towards both happiness and sadness, treating them with equal indifference.(2.38, 2.56)

Attitude to tackle dvandas.

Attitude of contentment.

Awareness of Raga and Dvesha. Recognize the two primary obstacles on the spiritual path:(paripanthis) Raga (compulsion to act on likes) and Dvesha (compulsive aversion to avoid dislikes).(3.34,7.27)

Awareness of the destructive Power of Desires (2.62-63, 3.37-39)

Understand that desires are the root cause of suffering and can lead to a downward spiral of 8 fold destruction such as kama, krodha, memoryloss, destruction of intellect etc

Detachment from material desires (2.47, 3.30)

Cultivate detachment from worldly attachments, focusing on duties without attachment to outcome.

Karma : Practising karma yoga by following the five main tenets, asanga, samatva, swabhava, samarpana and swadharma,

Shri Krishna teaches the attitude of renunciation as yagna. Renunciation of Raga and dvesha, fruits of actions, desires, all amount to yagna. The activities performed as oblation to Brahman (Tera tujhko arpan) elevates even a small daily activity into one of superior karma yoga . Paying attention to the external action and the internal attitude of non doership with surrender and gratitude towards Iswara is what yagna is.

Practising karma yoga as buddhi yoga as Shri Krishna defines Karma yoga because using intellect to perform actions is mandatory.

Dhyana : Shri Krishna advocates devoted contemplation of God look as the remedy to bring about purification of the mind which can keep the senses under control.

Krishna emphasizes the importance of controlling the mind, which is like a restless monkey (6.34)

Abyasa and vairagya .: Krishna stresses the importance of regular practice and dedication to achieve success in yoga (6.43-44).

Setting aside regular time and designated place each day to practice meditation,

Focusing on breath, a mantra, or a visualization. Practice controlling your mind by focusing on a single point, such as the breath or a mantra.

Bhakti: Cultivating the habit of remembering the Supreme in either nirguna (the premium Source or prabhava) or saguna the magnificent manifestations or the Avatars the delightful loving forms we can relate to at all times especially during meditation and prayers.

Engaging in devotional practice such as chanting, singing and selfless service

Surrender with humility and acceptance with prasada bhava.

Attitude of shraddha in the teachings, in the supreme and worshipping Him in all His glorious manifestations readily available to us.

Attitude for daily life in the BG **summary**.

Definition: Attitude is the way you feel, think and behave.

Acceptalis Totalis [accept totally] sums it all.

1. If despondent - non attachment, clarity, courage.
2. When sad - contemplate transience of life, dvandva, and endure, notice what is that, which is unchanging.
3. When angry - remember the cascade that follows
4. When filled with desire - discriminate what is the result of indulgence, withdraw the senses like the tortoise.
5. When agitated - seek chittaprasadanam [cheerful mind] by following the sthitapradnya [the one who has gained total equanimity, is stable in wisdom].
6. When stressed - karmaphala tyaga know Prakruti does all, and secrets of action
7. Distracted - follow principles of ch 6 udharet And meditation

8. When disappointed renew the practice with enthusiasm and introspect am I attached to the result?
9. When one feels a lack - consider Avidya and what is Maya?
10. When curious - study BG assiduously. Nature of reality, note the order in the cosmos – yajnya- all is happening as though a 'sacrifice' is being performed.
11. When in distress, afflicted, - know the Saguna and worship the Lord, surrender samarpan.
12. As a leader - do your karma perfectly without trying to talk philosophy to the masses. Maintain the role
13. Dilemma whether to act or not to act - no one can exist without action assess your own Prakruti don't hypocritically renounce.
14. As a jnani inaction in action, total devotion to the beloved, there is no other. Overwhelming gratitude and wonder.

Conclusion

We observe that from the beginning Shri Krishna is advocating the prayerful attitude of faith and surrender.

8. Debate on 'Bhakti is easier to practise than Jnana

Summary of Debate:

For the benefit of us all, presenting a summary and salient points of our most animated and profound debate on 'Bhakti is easier to practise than Jnana.'
Just to put on record that by no means can Bhakti be decried. The following is for our benefit:

Bhakti

1. *Bhakti is the path of devotion. Without devotion even Jnana cannot be persisted with.*
2. *In this Vyavaharika Sat Ishvara exists exactly to the degree of reality that you exist. So if you believe you are this small, limited identity in the form of body/ mind most certainly Ishvara is the divine, infinite, all pervading, omnipotent Being Ishvara exists. He/She exists in the form you choose all forms are pertinent and possible as Ishvara is Infinite.*

3. Ishvara is worshipped by 4 different categories of people- the Aarta or afflicted, the Arthati or one desirous of wealth, the Jigyasu or curious to know the truth and the Jnyani who knows the Truth. None of the categories are to be decried because at the very least they believe in a higher entity. As is well known every karma has a result and so there is no denying that prayer works it has to. The result of any action as we know, is not in our hands and so the result of prayer may not be what you expect e.g. the patient on ventilator may pass in spite of prayer but will definitely get sadgati because of prayer. So, prayer has immense value exactly proportionate to the intensity and shraddha. There is no doubt about this. We all begin as Aartas / Artharthis- as we are convinced, we cannot achieve our desires by our own might. There is a small flaw in this which can be seen with Jnana - that if Isvara is All knowing- He should surely know what is best for me so is there a need to tell Him? All one should pray for is continued shraddha and courage to face the situation and that is sure to come. The Jigyasu is one who might have achieved all he wanted in this world or might be one who recognises the futility of sansar through previous life sanskaras and embarks on a wondrous journey to discover Isvara indeed to discover oneself. The Jnyani is one who knows the Truth and identifies Ishvara as his very own Self- there being no separation only love abides. In the other three there is Ishvara and me therefore love cannot be total for disappointment and betrayal can happen.

3. To think that Bhakti is easy to practise as one can remember the Lord in every action and offer it to Him is a fallacy because we see so many Bhaktas running after worldly pleasures while chanting Krishnarpanamastu all the time. They delude themselves that this indeed is the path. Ch. 12 BG. highlights the qualities of a true Bhakta which may be summarised ananya[no other], nirantar [uninterrupted] and Nishkam [without expectation]. Is that even possible? Yes, after Jnana - once one knows one's True nature the search ends and desire fails to delude.

4. Jnana may lead to a false sense of Knowledge and an increase in Ego with the delusion that one knows.

5. To love anyone, one has to know him. Knowledge results in unquestioned devotion.

Jnana

- 1. Jnana starts at the level of Jigyasu - trying to understand the nature of Reality.*
- 2. Jnana trusts one's own inner power to that extent it has taken a step in the right direction already.*
- 3. There are two paths in Knowledge - Dvaita and Advaita.*
- 4. Sankhya is the path of Dvaita which postulates two distinct realities Prakruti and Purusha. The world and sansar arise through Prakruti and its creative power which cannot be experienced without Purusha the Consciousness which lends Its Chit - to Jada Prakruti made of 3 Gunas which function according to their nature.*
- 5. The path of Advaita which embraces all including Bhakti and postulates that the source of the Universe and sansar is only One- Parabrahman. Both the Upaadan Karan [material cause] and Nimitta kaaran [efficient cause] are Brahman. Thereby meaning that Isvara does not have to go shopping to get material to build the mountains rivers, stars planets and humans etc. That the very source and material arise from Brahman therefore it is automatically pervaded by Brahman. On this path three levels of reality are given Pratibhasika sat [the reality of the dream world], Vyavaharika sat [the reality of the waking world- where Isvara exists] and the Paramarthika sat- the Reality of the Absolute. It is only in the Paramarthika sat that all is known to be just the One.*
- 6. The Jnana Marg lays bare the foundations of Reality hence no expectations arise except the eradication of Ignorance which is Avidya at the level of the individual [vyashti] and Maayaa at the level of the Universe [samashti].*
- 7. Once this Truth is recognised the fear of the rope being a snake in the dim light vanishes and sansar ends.*
- 8. Intellectual Understanding is an understanding [knowledge stand under therefore falling is impossible]and does magic in that everyday a new miracle unfolds. The point that Jnana may increase the Ego and one may be under the delusion of knowing the Truth can be avoided if one has a Guru – where once again Bhakti becomes an integral part of attaining Knowledge if IGNORANCE is to be removed in toto.*
- 9. Jnana marg, however does requires the devoted study and application of knowledge and hence Bhakti becomes an integral part of it.*

In conclusion one can say the right kind of Bhakti depends on Jnana and for Jnana to be imbibed Bhakti is essential. Over and above this Jnyotara [Bhakti rising after Jnana] Bhakti is an unconditional love and wonder at the magnificence of Parabrahman. Bhaktiotar Jnana [after the ultimate bhakti] is Jnana which the Lord Himself bestows on His devotee, that the Self and the Lord are the One Reality [BG Ch., 10 sh. 11]

9. What prevents you from moksha?

Not wanting to - the divided heart. We certainly want liberation or else we would not have studied the scriptures and attended innumerable satsangs. Yet, within there is a desire to hold on, to what we have already accumulated. We have no intention to give it up. Instead the only reason we aspire for moksha is we want more!!

Eknath: expresses the dilemma beautifully when he says “Yes, Lord I would like to go forward- just as long as I can stay here too!”

After all, it seems logical to try for something others do not have. Strange that the ego now wears a noble mask and masquerades as one with divine intentions. It even pretends to practise austerities. Underneath, more often than not is the desire for VALIDATION especially from a Guru. One wants to hear “ you are doing well my child”. I have noticed wherever there is a need for validation- it is the ego at work.

A little more about the “divided heart” term coined by Craig Hamilton. One takes two steps in the right direction and withdraws, this goes on with little forward movement. Even so, there is a change in the psyche which gives the capacity to cope with regular happenings in a more equanimous manner. It is only a slight betterment of the personality. It also gives psychological relief when embroiled in repetitive thinking. Just saying OM Tat Sat and switching off.

Yet all of this does not amount to mumukshatva, which is one pointed dedication to moksha abandoning all other pursuits, at least mentally. One

needs to be brutally honest to answer this question “do I truly want moksha?” The answer will inevitably be ‘yes and no.’

The next question that obviously arises

Why yes? Why no?

Yes because

1. We are dissatisfied with the worldly pleasures or we have received a slap from destiny
2. There is a sense of incompleteness even if we have every material gain life can offer.
3. Maybe just out of curiosity- isko bhi aajmaalete hai – let’s try this too.
4. Genuine good fortune to be sensitive and receive the Grace of a Self-realised Being.

No because

1. Abhi bhi asakti baaki hai - attachment is still taking a grip.
2. Kuch apne liye bachaa ke rakhna chahate ho - still want to keep something back for yourself (body identity)
3. The nagging doubt - I am not fit. See she/ he is so good no wonder they get spiritual experiences.
- 4. Fear of the unknown.**
5. Find security in the present comfortable relationships. Being content and therefore complacent too.
6. Getting to know God seems like very hard work.
7. Looking for short cuts

All of the above result in a divided heart ❤️ we want it, we don’t want it. Then can we get it???

The standard boulders in the pathway as given by Shri Krishna are Raga and Dvesha - attraction and aversion. We also repeatedly fall into the trap of Vishayanand - joy from objects.

Then is there a way out?

Always.

1. Recognise and be honest
2. Pray for Vivek and guidance from the Lord within, the Guru if fortunate to have one externally.
3. Let go of self-deprecation and relax.
4. Remember the world is a play and we are given our roles. Some good some not so good. God is the Producer Director, who every actor has a right to know - that is Bhakti - try to get to know the PD and you are through. You realise all are His creations how can you have any complaints against anyone - He has done it. On the other hand if you see through the play and drop the role (and the incessant modelling) you are free - that is jnana.

May the Lord bless us with Vivek and intense longing for Him. Jai Shri Krishna

Glossary

1. Abhaya (*uh-BHA-yuh*) – Fearlessness; freedom from fear, one of the divine qualities.
2. Abhimāna (*uh-bhi-MAA-nuh*) – Pride or self-identification with body, role, or status.
3. Abhoktā (*uh-BHOK-taa*) – The non-enjoyer; the Self which does not experience the fruits of action.
4. Acintya (*uh-CHIN-tyuh*) – That which cannot be conceived by the mind.
5. Adhibhūta (*uh-dhi-BHOO-tuh*) – The physical or material aspect of existence.
6. Adhidaiva (*uh-dhi-DY-vuh*) – The divine or cosmic intelligence governing the forces of nature.
7. Adhiyajña (*uh-dhi-YAJ-nyuh*) – The indwelling divine principle present in all sacrifice and action.
8. Adhikāritva (*uh-dhi-KAA-ri-tvuh*) – Spiritual preparedness or eligibility for Self-knowledge.
9. Adhyāropa (*ud-hyaa-RO-puh*) – Superimposition; the method of initially attributing qualities to explain truth.
10. Adhyāsa (*ud-hyaa-suh*) – Superimposition of the non-Self upon the Self; the root of ignorance.
11. Adhyātma (*ud-hyaat-muh*) – That which pertains to the Self or inner spiritual reality.
12. Ahaṅkāra (*uh-hung-KAA-ruh*) – Ego-sense; the notion “I am the doer.”
13. Ahimsā (*uh-HIM-saa*) – Non-violence in thought, word, and deed.
14. Ajñāna (*uh-GYAA-nuh*) – Ignorance of one’s true nature.
15. Akartā (*uh-KAR-taa*) – Non-doer; the Self which performs no action.
16. Akṣara (*uk-SHA-ruh*) – Imperishable; that which does not decay.
17. Anādi (*uh-NAA-dee*) – Beginningless.
18. Anityatva (*uh-NIT-yuh-tvuh*) – Impermanence.

19. Anubandha (*uh-noo-BUN-dhuh*) – Consequence or continued effect.
20. Anumāna (*uh-noo-MAA-nuh*) – Inference; a valid means of knowledge.
21. Anupalabdhī (*uh-noo-puh-LUB-dhee*) – non-cognition; knowledge of absence.
22. Anupatti (*uh-noo-PUT-tee*) – Objection or logical difficulty raised in discussion.
23. Apavāda (*uh-puh-VAA-duh*) – Negation; withdrawal of superimposition to reveal truth.
24. Aśaṅga (*uh-SUNG-guh*) – non-attachment.
25. Asat (*uh-SUT*) – Unreal or transient; that which lacks independent existence.
26. Āśrama (*AA-shruh-muh*) – Stages of life according to Vedic tradition.
27. Ātman (*AAT-mun*) – The Self; pure consciousness.
28. Avidyā (*uh-VID-yuh*) – Ignorance; mistaken identification with body-mind complex.
29. Avikārya (*uh-vi-KAA-ryuh*) – Changeless.
30. Avyakta (*uh-VYUK-tuh*) – Unmanifest.
31. Bandha (*BUN-dhuh*) – Bondage; limitation caused by ignorance.
32. Bheda (*BHAY-duh*) – Difference or distinction.
33. Bhakti (*BHUHK-tee*) – Devotion; love for the Divine.
34. Bhāva (*BHAA-vuh*) – Inner attitude or disposition.
35. Bhoktā (*BHOK-taa*) – Enjoyer; the one who experiences results of action.
36. Brahman (*BRUH-mun*) – Absolute Reality; existence-consciousness-bliss.
37. Brahmajñāna (*BRUH-muh-GYAA-nuh*) – Knowledge of Brahman.
38. Buddhi (*BUD-dhee*) – Intellect; faculty of discrimination.
39. Caitanya (*CHAI-tun-yuh*) – Consciousness.
40. Citta (*CHIT-tuh*) – Mind-stuff; storehouse of impressions.
41. Citta-śuddhi (*CHIT-tuh SHUD-dhee*) – Purification of the mind.

42. Daiva (*DY-vuh*) – Divine factor; unseen force shaped by past actions.
43. Daivī Sampat (*DY-vee SUM-put*) – Divine qualities conducive to liberation.
44. Dāna (*DAA-nuh*) – Charity or giving.
45. Dharma (*DHUR-muh*) – Righteousness; sustaining cosmic order.
46. Dhyāna (*DHYAA-nuh*) – Meditation.
47. Doṣa (*DOH-shuh*) – Defect or fault.
48. Guṇa (*GOO-nuh*) – Fundamental qualities of nature: sattva, rajas, tamas.
49. Guṇātīta (*GOO-naa-TEE-tuh*) – One who has transcended the guṇas.
50. Hṛdaya (*HRU-duh-yuh*) – Heart; inner core of being.
51. Icchā (*ICH-chhaa*) – Desire or will.
52. Indriya (*IN-dree-yuh*) – Sense organs of perception and action.
53. Īśvara (*EE-shvuh-ruh*) – The Lord; cosmic intelligence.
54. Jagat (*JUH-gut*) – The world of names and forms.
55. Jñāna (*GYAA-nuh*) – Knowledge, especially Self-knowledge.
56. Jñāna-niṣṭhā (*GYAA-nuh NISH-thaa*) – Abidance in knowledge.
57. Jñāna-yajña (*GYAA-nuh YUJ-nyuh*) – Sacrifice through knowledge.
58. Jīva (*JEE-vuh*) – Individual embodied being.
59. Kaivalya (*KY-vul-yuh*) – Absolute freedom; liberation.
60. Kāma (*KAA-muh*) – Desire, particularly for pleasure.
61. Karma (*KUR-muh*) – Action; law of cause and effect.
62. Karmaphala (*KUR-muh-PHUH-luh*) – Fruit of action.
63. Karma-yoga (*KUR-muh YO-guh*) – Path of selfless action.
64. Karaṇa (*KUR-ruh-nuh*) – Instrument or means of action.
65. Kartā (*KUR-taa*) – Doer; agent of action.
66. Kṣamā (*KSHUH-maa*) – Forgiveness; forbearance.
67. Lakṣaṇa (*LUK-shuh-nuh*) – Definition or indication.
68. Lobha (*LOH-bhuh*) – Greed.
69. Madhyama (*MUDH-yuh-muh*) – One of moderate capacity.
70. Mala (*MUH-luh*) – Impurity or limitation.
71. Manana (*MUH-nuh-nuh*) – Reflection on teachings.

72. Manas (*MUH-nuss*) – Mind; faculty of thinking and doubting.
73. Māyā (*MAA-yuh*) – Cosmic illusion; power projecting multiplicity.
74. Mithyā (*MITH-yuh*) – Apparently real but not absolutely real.
75. Mokṣa (*MOHK-shuh*) – Liberation from bondage.
76. Mumukṣutva (*moo-mook-SHOO-tvuh*) – Intense desire for liberation.
77. Nāda (*NAA-duh*) – Subtle sound or vibration.
78. Naiṣkarmya (*NYSH-KUR-myuh*) – State of actionlessness.
79. Nididhyāsana (*ni-di-DHYAA-suh-nuh*) – Deep contemplation leading to realization.
80. Nirguṇa (*NEER-goo-nuh*) – Without attributes.
81. Niṣkāma Karma (*NISH-KAA-muh KUR-muh*) – Action without desire for results.
82. Oṃ (*AUM*) – Primordial sound symbolizing Brahman.
83. Parā Bhakti (*PUH-raa BHAK-tee*) – Supreme devotion.
84. Paramānanda (*PUH-ruh-MAA-nun-duh*) – Supreme bliss.
85. Paramātmā (*PUH-ruh-MAAT-maa*) – Supreme Self.
86. Pariṇāma (*PUH-ri-NAA-muh*) – Transformation.
87. Prakṛti (*PRUH-kru-tee*) – Nature; material cause of creation.
88. Pramāṇa (*PRUH-MAA-nuh*) – Means of valid knowledge.
89. Pratyakṣa (*PRUH-tyuk-shuh*) – Direct perception.
90. Pravṛtti (*PRUH-vrut-tee*) – Engagement in action.
91. Puruṣa (*POO-roo-shuh*) – Conscious principle.
92. Rāga (*RAA-guh*) – Attachment.
93. Rajas (*RUH-jus*) – Quality of activity and passion.
94. Rūpa (*ROO-puh*) – Form.
95. Sādhana (*SAA-dhuh-nuh*) – Spiritual practice.
96. Sākṣī (*SAAK-shee*) – Witness consciousness.
97. Samādhi (*suh-MAA-dhee*) – Absorption in the Self.
98. Sampradāyavid (*SUM-pruh-DAA-yuh-vid*) – One who knows the traditional method of teaching.
99. Saṃsāra (*SUM-SAA-ruh*) – Cycle of birth and death.
100. Saṅkalpa (*SUN-kul-puh*) – Resolve or intention.
101. Sannyāsa (*SUN-nyAA-suh*) – Renunciation of action motivated by desire.

102. Saṃskāra (*SUM-SKAA-ruh*) – Mental impressions.
103. Sat (*SUT*) – Absolute reality; that which truly exists.
104. Sattva (*SUT-tvuh*) – Quality of purity and harmony.
105. Śraddhā (*SHRUD-dhaa*) – Faith born of understanding.
106. Śravaṇam (*SHRUH-vuh-nuhm*) – Listening to the teachings.
107. Śreyas (*SHRAY-us*) – The good; that which leads to liberation.
108. Svabhāva (*SVUH-BHAA-vuh*) – One’s inherent nature.
109. Svadharma (*SVUH-DHUR-muh*) – One’s own duty according to nature.
110. Svarūpa (*SVUH-ROO-puh*) – Essential nature.
111. Tamas (*TUH-muss*) – Quality of inertia and ignorance.
112. Tat (*TUT*) – “That”; the Absolute principle.
113. Tattva (*TUT-tvuh*) – Principle or reality.
114. Tyāga (*TYAA-guh*) – Renunciation of the fruits of action.
115. Turiya (*too-REE-yuh*) – The fourth state of consciousness beyond waking, dream, and deep sleep.
116. Upādhi (*oo-PAA-dhee*) – Limiting adjunct.
117. Upāsana (*oo-PAA-suh-nuh*) – Devotional worship or meditation.
118. Uparati (*oo-puh-RUH-tee*) – Withdrawal from sense indulgence.
119. Vairāgya (*VY-RAA-gyuh*) – Dispassion.
120. Vāsanā (*VAA-suh-nuh*) – Subtle tendencies.
121. Vedānta (*vay-DAAN-tuh*) – End of the Vedas; philosophy of non-duality.
122. Vicāra (*vi-CHAA-ruh*) – Inquiry.
123. Vikāra (*vi-KAA-ruh*) – Modification or change.
124. Viveka (*vi-VAY-kuh*) – Discrimination between the real and unreal.
125. Vivarta (*vi-VUR-tuh*) – Apparent transformation.
126. Yajña (*YUJ-nyuh*) – Sacrifice; self-offering.
127. Yoga (*YO-guh*) – Union; spiritual discipline.

About the Author

Dr. Shirin Venkat, a distinguished obstetrician and gynecologist, has dedicated over 45 years to women's health. Graduating as a gold medalist from Grant Medical College, Mumbai, she further honed her expertise in England, earning an FRCOG. Throughout her career, she has worked in high-volume obstetric centers in Dubai and Mumbai, managing over 10,000 deliveries annually and developing significant expertise in high-risk pregnancies.



Beyond her professional achievements, Dr. Shirin has been a passionate advocate for maternal health. She spearheaded initiatives like the SuPrabha Ganga Yatra (SGY) and Hara Narmade Yatra (HNY), raising awareness about maternal mortality. Her dedication to this cause led her to meet esteemed figures such as Hon. President APJ Abdul Kalam and Hon. President Pratibha Patil at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

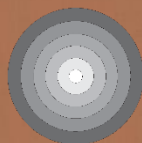
Raised by a deeply spiritual mother, Dr. Shirin's early travels across India to meet Enlightened Masters profoundly influenced her spiritual journey. She remains committed to her spiritual practices, integrating them seamlessly with her professional life. As a disciple of Swami Rama and later Swami Veda Bharati, she emphasizes the importance of spirituality in achieving a balanced life.

Dr. Shirin's contributions extend to literature and media. She has authored several books, including:

1. Holistic Motherhood (available for free download on <https://www.jaypeedigital.com/book/9789352500444>)
2. Jivansar Kathamrut (available for free download on <https://iire.in/Books.aspx>)
3. Your Questions Answered
4. Shiv Goraksha by Mrunalini Joshi Translated into English (available for free download on <https://iire.in/Books.aspx>)
5. Essays on Ancient Wisdom (available for free download on <https://iire.in/Books.aspx>)

Additionally, she shares insights on her YouTube channel.

Dr. Shirin strongly believes that integrating spirituality with professional pursuits leads to a more fulfilling and balanced life.



Inner Search Foundation
Mumbai