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I attended recently Swami Paramaarthanadaji class on Bhagawat Geeta and on that day he was summarizing Ch. 3. That motivated me to jot down some notes. I am going to post as couple of parts since it is becoming too long.

Hari OM!

Sadananda

Karma Yoga: Summary of Chapter III: Part I

The chapter starts with Arjuna's question; what yoga is good for him; Should he do jnaana yoga or karma yoga?. Krishna glorified at the end of the second chapter Jnaana yoga with the discussions on sthitaprajna lakshaNa. At the same time, Arjuna feels that he is being pushed to perform Karma yoga, which in his case involves fighting the terrible war. He wants Krishna to decide what is the most appropriate for him. Implication of Arjuna's question is that a seeker has a choice to do Karma Yoga or Jnaana Yoga. Since Jnaana Yoga leads to Jnaana, which is the means for liberation, then why one should do karma yoga? This forms the basis for this chapter.

Krishna essentially answers that there is no choice between karma yoga and jnaana yoga. Everyone has to do karma yoga since that is prerequisite for jnaana yoga. Karma yoga prepares the mind for jnaana yoga. Jnaana yoga only liberates the person.

na karmaNaamanaarambhaat nai skharmyam purusho2shnute|
na ca sanyaasanaat eva si ddhi m samadhi gacchati |

Essentially without karmayoga one cannot gain the requisite qualifications for jnaana yoga. By just giving up karma one cannot attain the equanimity of the mind. In addition, no one can ever remain a moment without performing an action – He will be propelled to act because of his vaasana-s.

Na hi kaschi t kshaNamapi jaatu tushhTasya karma kRit|
kaaryate hyavashhaH karma sarvaH prakRiti jai H guNai H||

Later in the 6th Chapter Krishna tells us when to give up Karma yoga – that is when one becomes yogaarudhaH – that is when one is able to contemplate single pointedly in the direction specified by the scriptures. yogaaruuDhasya tasai va shamaH kaaraNamuchyate| and who is yogaaruuDhaH? – sarva sankalpa sanyaasi yogaaruuDha stadocyate|| - the one who has no more interest in the sense pleasures, or in performing any action, and who likes to withdraw from all non-essential activities, he is said to be yogaruuDhaH|

If so, then what constitutes Karma yoga? This is discussed in slokas 8-20 of the Chapter.

One who performs the vidi ta karma-s; that is obligatory duties - these can be shastra vidi ta or Veda vihi ta and some desha kaala aashrama vidi ta – Those actions specified by the scriptures. Some obligatory duties depend on time, place as well as on ones vocation or position in the family and society.

The essential ingredient of the obligatory actions or niyata karma are, they are all intended for the benefit of the others and not for oneself - that is they are not self-fish activities.

The purpose of doing these niyata karma-s is they expand the mind or purifies the selfishness in the saadhak and purifies him.

According to Swami Paramaarthanandaji there are 5 important vidi ta karma-s which are considered as yagna-s – and grouped as panca mahaa yagna-s:

1. deva yagna
2. pitri yagna
3. Rishi yagna
4. manushya yagna
5. bhuuta yagna

1. Deva yagna – also called deva Ri Na – is obligation to the Gods. Gods are the phenomenal forces that give results for the actions. Whatever is given to us is due to blessings of the Deva-s. Deva yagna involves a recognition of the fact that you are getting benefit from the Nature and it is your duty to return back (with interest) to the nature. Swami Chinmayanandaji puts in a beautiful form: What I have is His gift to me

and what I do with what I have is my gift to Him.

Yagna means worship. Deva yagna involves worship of the Gods recognizing that you are the beneficiary of the natural forces. It starts with prayer, first thing in the morning and ends with a prayer as last thing before one sleeps. One benefits from nature immensely - air to breath, water to drink, food to eat and so on. Krishna says in the 15th chapter – aham vi shvaanaro bhauutvaa praaNi naam dehamaashri taH| praaNaapaana samaayuktaH pachaamyannam caturvi dham|| I am the one in all beings who is propelling all the essential physiological functions – prana to appana, vyana, udana, samaana – contributing to the digestion of the four types of food that one intakes. So while we are sleeping, Krishna is awake working whole night digesting the food that we eat. Without his presence we cannot even breathe for a second. A recognition of this fact with a reverential attitude is deva yagna. Of course it also includes other obligatory duties including sandhyaa vandanam, puja, etc.

For obligatory duties, it is said that by commission one does not gain any merits but by omission one gains demerits or paapam. Fact of the matter is, it purifies the mind and makes one humble, since one recognizes that every thing is gift from Gods, and nothing is taken for granted. I recognized how lucky I am, when I visited a cousin of mine few months ago, who lost both his kidneys and had to undergo painful dialysis everyday. God has given us a double gift to be safe, but we take things for granted. Only when they do not function we recognize how lucky we were upto that point. Ability to breathe without a problem is a God-given gift, and we can recognize that only when we are not able to breathe and had to use a machine to force the air in. Deva Rina or obligation to gods is the recognition that we cannot even lift a blade of a grass without their help, and that there is nothing that really belongs to us and everything that we have is only a gift from the Gods. In the last chapter of Kenopanishad there a story of how Gods, vaayu, varuna, agni learn that they cannot even lift, wet or burn a blade of grass without the help of that life-principle.

Shankara says in Vi vekachuuDaamani – manushyatvam, mumukshutvam, mahaapurushha samsrayam, dai vaanugaha hetukam – being born as a human being, intensive desire for liberation and association with great souls are only due to the blessings of the God. Since God is the giver of the fruits of actions, karma yoga starts by recognizing this fact and performing all actions in the attitude of prayer to the Gods and accepting the results as prasaada. Iswaraarpana buddhi and prasaada budhhi are two essential ingredients of Karma yoga.

2. Pitri yagna: worship of our forefathers – It is the recognition that how blessed I am for having parents who could take care of me when I was in pitiable condition and educate me with proper values. Particularly the Indian parents sacrifice everything they have for the benefit of their children. It is blessing to be born to such parents. It is the

recognition that everything that I have is the result of their sacrifice. Vedic instructions maatRi devo bhava, pitRi devo bhava recognizes that these two are the first Gods that need to be worshipped. Formally, pitRi yagna includes all the vedic rituals that need to be performed, tarpanas, shraadha-s, etc, where three generation of forefathers are prayed. Incidentally, tarpana is also done not only for ones parents, but for other parents, whose children are failing to do their duties.

3. Rishi yagna: Rishi stands for both the Veda-s and also guru parampara starting from Veda Vyasa all the way to ones own teacher. This yagna is done by daily study of the scriptures and by passing on the knowledge to others what one has gained from his teacher. Thus, guru parampara is established and veda-s are handed down from generation to generation to come. We are blessed indeed by such unparalleled treasure of knowledge left behind by our fore-fathers and it becomes our duty study them and pass it on to the next generation. The daily study of the scriptures is Rishi yagna.

4. Manushya yagna: This is service to humanity. 'Maanava sevaye maadhava seva' is well known proverb. One ends all prayers with - sarve janaaH sukhi no bhavantu. Samasta san mangalaani santu| kaale varshhatu parjanyaH, pRithiviH sasyashaalini i, deshoyam shoba rahi taH, brahmaanaasantu ni rbhayaah - go braahmanebhyam shubamastu ni tyam lokas samastaa sukhi no bhavantu - are the prayers to be done with devoted mind. Here BrahmaaH stands for wise people who are the backbone of the society preserving and passing on the knowledge and wisdom to the next generation. Self-less service to humanity at large is emphasized in all religions.

5. Bhuuta yagna: This is service to the other living beings with appropriate attitude. - 'sarva bhuuta hete rataah' - one has to be well wishers to the whole jivas - without disturbing the ecology. Polluting the rivers and oceans destroys the ecology. Unnecessary hurting any animal in the name of sport is very bad - This include fishing and hunting as sport. Bhuta yagna as daily prayer and often feeding the animals is part of become sensitive to the needs of other beings. Taking more than what one needs from the Nature is a sin. Animals take what they need. It is only human that takes more than what he needs - that is essentially is due to Greed.

These panca mahaa yagnaas are considered as obligatory duties and helps in recognizing ones role and responsibilities in the whole creation. We are only travelers in this earth and have no right to destroy other co-travelers in our pursuit for our happiness. In the US constitution it is stated that all men are equal right in the pursuit of life/liberty and happiness. Vedanta recognizes that and extends to all beings.

Hence Krishna says niyatam kuru karma tvam|. Niyatam includes niyata and

hai mitti ka – the daily obligatory and occasional obligatory duties. Kuru means one has to do – it is viddhi vaakyam – therefore not doing or omission results in sin. Hence Krishna declares – karma jyaayo hyakarmaNaH – It is better to do the actions than omitting them. Hence karma yoga is not a choice that one has.

Krishna also gives a warning for those who do not want to follow karma yoga and we will discuss that later.

end of part I

From: kuntimaddi sadananda <kuntimaddisada@yahoo.com>
Date: Sat Dec 24, 2005 5:37 am
Subject: Karma yoga Part II

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We discussed in part 1, the panca maha yagnas that one has to do for his purification. Now we will discuss a broader meaning that Krishna provides for Yagna.

The Secret of Success: Along with karma yoga, Krishna reveals the Secret of Success in this chapter. It is embedded in the spirit of yagna. If an individual, a society, organization, or even a nation has to succeed, it has to follow this recipe. Krishna warns that if this is not followed, it will be doomed. You can see why Bhaarat was enslaved by the foreigners.

Krishna says in chapter 4 there are various types of yagnas that one can do. Thus, he provides a broader meaning for what yagna stands for.

These include dravya yagna, tapo yagna, yoga yagna, svaadhyaya yagna, jnaana yagna, etc. Krishna says of all yagnas the best is jnaana yagna – since the end goal of all yagna-s is jnaanam or knowledge only – sarvam karma akhilam paarthajnaane parisamaapayate.

Yagna involves 'sacrifice'. It is sacrificing ones own ego. Ultimately, it is sacrificing the 'kartRi tva bhaava' or notion that I am a 'doer'. Fulfillment of that sacrifice is the understanding, the knowledge or jnaana, that 'I am never a doer, while all the doings are being done in my presence'.

Yagna also involves a cooperative endeavor, where a collective action is involved for the completion of the action to its fulfillment. Combining all these aspects, we can define yagna as 'a cooperative endeavor that is done in complete self-sacrificing mode for the benefit of the totality'. At body level, the spirit of yagna involves a cooperative endeavor of all the components – body, mind and intellect – in self-sacrificing mode (each component sacrificing) for the benefit of

the totality i.e. the individual. This involves a complete integration of the individual as one unit. This is what is called 'aarjavam' or straight forwardness. Manasa, vaachaa, karmanaa - what I feel, what I say and what I do - there is an integration of personality as one - no crookedness anywhere. Success is ensured only if there is such an integrated effort or yagna. At a family level, it involves cooperative endeavor involving all the components of the family – father, mother, all children – in individual self-sacrificing mode for the benefit of totality (family); then family will prosper. At an organizational level, it involves cooperative endeavor involving all the members of the organization, from president all the way to the servant, in complete self-sacrificing mode for the benefit of the totality (organization); then organization will prosper. This is true at the national level and true at the international level. In fact, Krishna declares all actions have to be done in the spirit of yagna. Otherwise, the action itself can become bondage – one cannot but act and action without the spirit of yagna can lead to further bondage. This, in fact, is the secret of a success or secret of correct action, whether it is at an individual level or at a national level. Krishna declares that the spirit of yagna is created by Brahma along with human beings for their prosperity with the blessing that it can be used to succeed in any endeavor.

saha yagnaaH prajaaH sRi shhTvaas purovaaaca prajaapatiH|
anena prasavi shhyadhvam eshhavo2stvi shhTakaamadhuk||

Thus, the spirit of yagna is a God given gift for humanity for it to prosper in any field of action. At Individual level, nation level or at international level, failure is there contributing to the suffering of the humanity, since there is no self-sacrificing mode of operation in the yagna spirit, but instead where selfishness dominates in every action at every level.

End of part II – Next we discuss the wheel of action.

From: kuntimaddi sadananda <kuntimaddisada@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon Dec 26, 2005 8:08 pm
Subject: Karma yoga Part III - The wheel of Action

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We discussed in part II, the secret of success in any endeavor. The success is possible when one performs the action in the spirit of yagna. The spirit of yagna involves a collective cooperative endeavor with each component contributing to its best in complete self-sacrificing mode for the benefit of the totality. Then totality will prosper. While providing this secret for success, Krishna also warns that if the action is not performed in the spirit of yagna, it will bind the individual causing one to go down the drain. Bhagavaan Ramana says – 'kRiti mahodadhou patanakaaranam' – one gets trapped into the whirlpool

of action, karma to janma to karma, punarapi janam punarapi maranam.
One is trapped in the ocean of samsaar, with no end in sight.

When collective effort is involved as in yagna, and when the results come out of such yagna, then the fair game is to share the results (yagna shishtha) in proportion to one's contribution to the yagna. Krishna provides another warning here. Those that partake more than their share, depriving the others their fair share, are essentially stealing from others. He will be not only committing sin but taking the other's sin as well. The law of action and reaction not only operates at the individual level, but also at organizational level and the national level, as well. In addition, those who do not work in the spirit of yagna but work for their own selfish goals (in the language of Gita, those who cook for themselves) they commit sin too.

The laws of action are uncompromisingly ruthless and operate at cosmic level. However, for those who understand these laws and operate within the laws, the same laws protect them. Looking at small window of one own life span, one gets the impression that one is getting away without any appropriate compensation or punishment. The laws operate at the cosmic level. The law of action and result is that everyone gets what he deserves, and not what he wants or does not want. The present is the result of past, and the future will be the result of the past modified by the present action. The choice is given for us, the humans (karmani eva adhi kaaraste) to steer out of the wrongdoings of the past by properly performing the actions now, in the spirit of yagna. One can also damn himself by improper action or adharmic action. The choice is ours. It is never too late to steer oneself out of this bondage. Krishna assures – swalpamal pasya dharmasya trayate mahato bhayaat! - if one starts performing even a little bit with the spirit of yagna, he gains a lot in return and slowly goes beyond the fear of death.

The wheel of action:

In addition to the spirit of yagna, Krishna provides a glimpse of how the wheel of action operates at the cosmic level, using the language of the yore. This is beautifully picturized in the Mahabharat TV series. Every episode starts with the wheel rotating at the cosmic level, with all the planets and stars moving around. Indian astrology is based on the observation that the exact position of the stars and planets with reference to the time and place of the birth of an individual provides a clue about his prarabda – or conversely the place and time of his birth and the position of the stars and planets are determined by his prarabda. It is an interesting point to consider in relation to the wheel of action.

Krishna says that when one performs the yagna (with all the doos and don'ts) properly, the gods will be pleased and those gods in turn please those who performed the yagna. Thus by pleasing each other, one attains

the success. So, the second condition for success is pleasing the Gods. This leads to topic of the eternal wheel of action: Krishna says the beings are born of out of food, the food is born out of rains, rains are born out of yagna, yagna is born out of action, action is the product of Vedas, and Vedas are from the Lord; – therefore know that Lord is always established in yagna. Therefore Arjuna, yagnaaartham kuru – do the action for yagna sake that is do the action as an offering to the Lord. This becomes iswaraararpa ta buddhi .

We can unravel the significance of the words used above to appeal for our rational intellects. Gods are the production potential in the field of action. Pleasing the gods therefore means performing the action as the field or the situation demands. Gods are pleased when the required actions are performed to their best. When the Gods are pleased they have to give the results appropriate for the action. When the results come, one has now a new set of environment that demands next action which again has to be performed in the spirit of yagna to please the Gods. Thus by pleasing one another the wheel of action is set in motion. The life involves dynamic action. Nature by itself is dynamic. The earth rotates, the seasons come and go, the seeds sprout, plants grow producing seeds, which again sprout giving rise to plants and thus life goes on, and the beginningless cycle of creation, sustenance and decay goes on eternally.

In Tai. Up. it saysaatmaanam aakaashH sambuutaH ... and so on and pRithivii then oshadayaH, then annam and then it says annaat purushH. Annam stands for what you eat (if you eat too much then it will eat you). annamaya kosha is born out of food, sustained by food and goes back into food. (Food also supports mano maya and vijnana maya koshaas too – You can test this by fasting more than a day or two and see how your mind loses the capacity to think. In fact, Uddalaka gives this test to his son swetaketu. Of course, if you eat too much also the mind cannot function, as it goes to sleep. Hence Krishna advocates yukta aahaaram, a balanced amount of food).

Food, here, includes all that one consumes through the five senses. When one consumes the karma phala, it will leave vasanas behind which forms the kaaraNa or cause for beings to be born. Hence Krishnas say annaat bhavanti bhuutaani – beings are born because of enjoying the karmaphala with ego-centric attitude. If annam is taken as prasaadam then the question of enjoying prasaadam is not there. You accept whatever is given with reverential attitude. Thus partaking prasaad or as prasaad purifies the mind.

Food is born out of rains. Rains are essentially the results that are showered due to the actions that are performed. Hence Krishna says 'Food is born out of rains, parjanyaat anna sambhavaH'. The results that one desires come from yagnas as we discussed above, where yagna stands for cooperative endeavor. Hence 'yagnaat bhavati parjanyaH'. Since

yagna involves cooperative endeavor Krishna says the rains (results) are due to karmas or actions. Karma comes from Veda – since we are dealing with Veda vihiita karmas or obligatory duties specified by Veda. To be more general, Veda means knowledge. The obligatory duties come from clear understanding (or knowledge) of one's role as an individual in the family, in the society, in the nation and in the world. Finally the Vedas come from the Lord. This is to be understood both from the Veda as pramaana which is considered as aourusheya i.e. not authored by any human. It also means in the absolute sense Knowledge which is unborn, is eternal, ever present, It is essentially the Brahman as cit swaruupa, knowing which there is nothing else to be known, 'yat jnaatvaa naaparam jnyeyam, tat brahmetyavadhaarayet'. Therefore, know Arjuna that all pervading Brahman is eternally present in the yagna.

In essence, perform your duties in the spirit of yagna and from the results that come out of that action take what you deserve. Keep only what you need and return back to the totality in the form of yagna (which includes all the pancha bhuuta yagnas discussed above). Thus become an participant in this eternal wheel of action. This way one purifies his mind and makes it free from the pressure of Vasana-s.

Swami Chinmayandaji has developed a Chinmaya Mission pledge, based on this principle, which essentially is recognition and commitment to this eternal wheel of action, to be performed by a saadhak for his growth.

We stand as one family bound to each other with love and respect.

We serve as an army, courageous and disciplined, ever ready to fight against all low tendencies and false values, within and without us.

We live honestly the noble life of sacrifice and service, producing more than what we consume, and giving more than what we take.

We seek the Lord's grace, to keep us on the path of virtue, courage and wisdom.

May Thy grace and blessings flow through us to the world around us.

We believe that the service of our country is the service of the Lord of Lords, and devotion to the people is the devotion to the Supreme Self.

We know our responsibilities; Give us the ability and courage to fulfill them.

Om Tat Sat .

End of part III. Next we will discuss about the devoted action.

From: kuntimaddi sadananda <kuntimaddisada@yahoo.com>
 Date: Wed Dec 28, 2005 8:55 pm
 Subject: On Karma Yoga: Part IV - Swadharma

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Swadharma

We have discussed the obligatory duties or niyata karmas. But what about the kaamya karma-s or desire prompted actions. Should one perform or not. Does one have a choice not to perform? Asking us not to have desires is a useless advice since we already have them. It was mentioned that among the purushhaarthaas, we have artha and kaama along with dharma and moksha. During marriage time one declares in front of the fire, 'dharmeca, artheca, kaameca naati charaami', I take this lady as my wife to follow the three purushhaarthaas only.

The desires are classified as two types. One is dhaarmic or righteous and the other is adhaarmic or unrighteous. Dharma depends on the aashrama or simply one's status in the family and in the society.

Krishna says:

shreyaan swadharma vi guNaH paradharmaat svanushhTi taat |
 svadharne ndi dhanam shreyaH paradharmo bhayaavahaH |

Krishna says that it is better to follow one's dharma than dharma of others, even if he can do that better. It is better to die while doing one's dharma than taking up dharma of others, since in the final analysis the later would lead to a fearful end. Swadharma has been interpreted as varnaashrama dharma, which depends on one's guNa and karma. Since Krishna is a universal teacher (jagat guru) and the Geeta's teaching has universal application, varnaasrama dharma based on guNa and Karma is a universal classification, relevant not just for Bhaarat. Those who have predominate saatvic guNa are intellectually oriented and prone to a contemplative mode of living, and it is better for them to study, teach and contemplate on the higher nature. Those who have predominantly rajasic guNa are action-oriented and cannot sit down and contemplate, their swadharma demands an active life of constructing, maintaining law and order and improving the standard of living for all beings. They are workers of the society – religious workers, political workers, social workers, etc. And those who are tamasic by nature and do not have any self-motivated drive and do not have the capacity to study, or act independently, it is better for them to follow their leaders and act as instructed. They are laborers. Their motivation for work is only sense-enjoyment. There are intermediate class whose major concern is only their bottom line, the business minded persons, who work towards their gain. They look for name and fame or self-glory, even while performing noble actions that benefit the totality. Thus Krishna provides a universal classification based on both guNa and karma. This

Classification is provided to evaluate oneself to determine his own swadharma and is not meant for evaluating others, since one cannot evaluate others as these gunas are based on mental attitudes than physical attributes. Applying the converse, those who work for their selfish ends only are laborers (they could be Ph.Ds), those who work for the benefit of society are workers where primary beneficiary is the society, and those who study, teach and contemplate on the higher reality are contemplative seekers. This classification is universal. Being in a conducive environment or born to saatvic, rajasic or tamasic parents could cause to foster similar gunas, but that by itself does not define one's swadharma. One can see that children born to the same parents having different types of guna and karma. One's samskaara dictated by his guna and karma alone determine one swadharma. By following one's dharma one evolves to higher – from tamasic to rajasic to saatvic is the path of evolution. Saatvic nature alone takes one to go beyond all gunas through contemplation. 'dhyaanena aatmani pasyanti'.

We may note here, as a slight divergence, that Bhagavan Ramanuj provides a peculiar interpretation for swadharma and paradharma. Swadharma is interpreted as doing karma yoga and paradharma is interpreted as doing jnaana yoga – where jnaana yoga in his system involves realization of one's own self (jiivaatma), which is not the final end in itself. Self realization is only a step towards realization of Paramaatma, which can happen only when that self that is realized completely surrenders – which is called prapatti or sharanNaagati. For that, Bhakti is the only means and not jnaana or karma, or to put it correctly it is bhakti ruupaka jnaana involving a recognition of sesha-sheshii bhaava. Jiiva is dependent entity and Paramaatma is the independent entity and is all pervading reality that indwells in all, as antaryamin. The relation between paramaatma and jiiva is not one of identity as in advaita, but one of organic relationship. That is, jiiva is part of Paramaatma like an organ is part of a body. That is oneness from the total perspective like one body (advaita), but distinct and different from the rest of the jiiva-s, and different from jagat with different and non-different relation with Paramaatma- vishishtha advaita. From Ramanuja's point, the above sloka excludes everybody from jnaana yoga since it is paradharma for everybody. Ramanuja says one need not go through that path since one can directly go from karma yoga to bhakti yoga using charama sloka (sarva dharmaan pari tyaj ya..) as the basis, where one surrenders all dharma-s other than, of course, service to the Lord or kainkarya dharma.

Coming back to our topic, adhaarmic desires are called nishiddha karma and to be avoided at all costs. In case if one does without his knowledge, there is a praayaschitta karma, constituting essentially actions to repair the damage as much as possible. Even if it does not eliminate, it makes one to be conscious of his actions, so that he does

not repeat it in future. Once a devotee-salesman asked Swami Chinmayanandaji, "Swami ji, as a salesman I have to lie a lot to sell the products that I know are not really worth, but that is my profession; what should I do". Swami ji said, "Then, do it very well, but do not forget to take the help of Krishna, He is good in that". Then Swami ji added "It becomes Krishna's problem and not yours. He will make sure you will find a better job that is conducive to your dharma. Until then follow Krishna's orders; just as Arjuna did to kill Karna when Karna became armless or shot arrows at Bhisma hiding behind Shikandhi'. Once you handed over your reins to the Lord, you are no more accountable. Hence, Krishna says:

mayi sarvaani karmaani sanyasyaadhyaatma cetasaai|
ni raashi irni rmamo bhuutvaa yudhyasva vigataj varah||

Offer all actions (without exceptions – including both obligatory and desire prompted actions) to me with full devotion without concerning about the results and without any attachments and excitements that deprive one's efficiency in action – fight on your war of life. This teaching is repeated in the ninth chapter – where Krishna says – I accept everything as prayer if it is done with full devotion.

yat karoshhi yadashnaasi yajjuhoshhi dadaasi yat|
yattapsyasi kounteya tatkurushhva madarpanam||

Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as oblations, whatever you donate and whatever austerities you perform, offer all that to me. Of course, He will not accept anything even if your offer unless it is done with full devotion – 'yo me bhaktyaa prayacchati'.

Devotion to the Lord becomes a glue in converting karma to karma yoga. I cannot offer all my actions to the Lord, unless I am a full-time devotee. This we will discuss in the next part.

From: kuntimaddi sadananda <kuntimaddisada@yahoo.com>

Date: Fri Dec 30, 2005 6:07 am

Subject: On Karma Yoga: V - Devotion and Devotee

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Devotion and Devotee

Love for higher is called devotion, while love for the lower is called lust. One rises in devotion while the other falls in love or lust. What constitutes 'higher'? That which provides an inspiration, that which integrates the mind and intellect, that which makes the mind calm and quiet, and that which energizes an individual is called the higher goal. Higher the goal, higher the energy that one can tap from the goal itself. An inspired action can follow from the one who has high goal

provided his mind is fully dedicated or devoted to the action. A puny man with a stick in his hand and handful of salt in the other could inspire the whole nation and shake the whole British Empire only because of his complete surrenderance to the highest goal.

Love demands sacrifice. 'I love you, but...' that but does not come when there is pure love. This is shown beautifully in Ramanand Sagar's Ramayana Series where Bharata goes to forest to bring Rama back to Ayodhya. He goes to the forest with notion that his devotion to Rama is greater than Rama's commitment to Dharma, and Rama has to oblige to return to Ayodhya. Janaka points out that devotion is greater than dharma provided one surrenders to his Lord. In surrenderance, there is no demand of 'what I want' other than fulfilling only whatever the Lord wants - 'thy will be done not mine' should be the understanding. Iswara arpaNa will be transformed as Iswara aajna or daiva iccha - His will or His desire.

Role of a Devotee:

Life involves playing many roles and transacting with duality. From morning until night and from birth to death one is constantly playing roles. I am a son, brother, husband, father, employee, citizen, etc. All these are roles that I play. When I encounter my father, I am a son; when I encounter my daughter, I am a father; when I encounter my wife I am a husband; and when I encounter my office I am an employee, etc. Thus with each encounter I play a different role. All roles are temporal roles since I am not a father all the time. I am a father only when I encounter my daughter, and husband only when I encounter my wife and likewise the other roles. In each role, I have to play my role as best as I can to make the drama of life as beautiful as possible. Life is a drama and one has to play the roles as long as one lives. Playing the game of life is not a problem, provided I know how to play. In the role-playing, I do face the problems in those roles; and that is part of the play. As a father, I may face a problem but as a husband or employee, I have no problems. The father role has a problem but those problems have nothing to do with other roles. If I am good actor playing different roles, each role is played independent of other roles. Unfortunately, our problem is we do not know how to act in the drama of life. When father-role has a problem in the father-daughter set-up, I am carried away with that problem affecting my play in the other roles. Then playing all the roles becomes a problem. However, roles will have a problems and that is the nature of the roles and the nature of the drama of life itself. There should not be any problem if the roles have a problem; otherwise, the drama will be dull. However, if the problem of a role is taken as my problem, then I have a real problem. This is our number one problem.

Just as I am playing the role of father when I encounter my daughter, and role as a husband when I encounter my wife, I play the role of

devotee when I go to the temple. Once out of the temple, I am back to other roles. Thus, unfortunately, the role of devotee is also taken as a temporal role like any other role. My relationship with the Lord has become like any other relationships – that means I have not understood what Lord means. I have not recognized that Lord is everywhere and in every 'set-up'. Therefore a devotee's role is not a temporal role, since Lord and I are present in every set-up that I am involved (antarabha scha tat sarvam vyaapta naaraayana sthi taH – Narayana is inside as well as outside – there is no place where He is not). If I start recognizing this fact, then my role as a devotee and my relationship to the Lord become a fundamental relationship, independent of time and space. I cannot but be a devotee all the time, since I cannot but encounter the Lord all the time, and in all encounters.

If we examine this carefully, we have to play two roles all the time, one a temporal role depending on the set-up and the other a devotee role in any set-up. Hence, I am father plus a devotee, a husband plus a devotee, a son plus a devotee, an employee plus a devotee, a seeker plus a devotee. My devotee's role remains constant while the other roles keep changing with the changing set-up. First thing to do is to recognize this fact and have constant awareness that Lord is there everywhere, and I cannot afford not to be a devotee all the time. We cannot even afford to ignore this relationship, since unlike other relationships this is a fundamental relationship in all relationships. When I love my daughter, I automatically am conscious of her presence when she is there and am ready to sacrifice for her happiness. The love flows in all my dealings with her. Similarly when I have the devotion (I love for the higher is devotion) for the Lord, I have to begin to recognize His presence wherever he is and offer with love whatever I can. Only way to win over the Lord is by devotion. This is beautifully depicted in the story of 'Shree Krishna Tulaabhaaram' in Bhagavatam. Satyabhama wanted to win over Krishna by offering equivalent weight of gold. However, she did not realize that there is no way Krishna who supports the whole universe can be weighed by any amount of gold. On the other hand, Rukmini wins over him with just a leaf of tulasi offered with devotion. Krishna says:

patram pushpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktyaa prayacchati |
tadam bhaktupahRi tam ashnaame priyataatmanah|||
Whoever offers me a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water desiring nothing but with full devotion, I will accept it very gladly.

Hence, 'yat karoti yad ashnaati .. tat kurushve madarpanam' whatever you do and whatever you eat .. offer it to me' can happens once I recognize that I have to play the role of the devotee all the time. But fact of the matter is, whatever I do or eat, it is automatically offered to him – since I have only choice in action but not in the results and He is the one who takes the action and return the results. He is already receiving the action whether I offer it to him or not. Similarly, he is

the one who as vai swaanara staying inside and digesting all that food that I eat. When he is already receiving everything anyway, why does He ask us to offer them with devotion?

When one offers with devotion, two things happen. First, we are recognizing the fact that He is everywhere and everything belongs to Him. So what we are offering is not ours but His only. Then, what we are offering is only our notions that it is ours. We are essentially offering our ahankaara and mamakaara, the notions that 'I am the doer and I am the enjoyer', which bind us down to our karma.

Second thing is in terms of our role-playing. We discussed that we are playing two roles, a husband plus a devotee, father plus a devotee, etc. Husband plus a devotee becomes a devoted husband. Father plus a devotee becomes a devoted father. Similarly a devoted employee, a devoted citizen, etc. Every action becomes a devoted action, with Him present. When one performs one's best, then it becomes a devoted action. Then the action itself becomes a prayer to the Lord. Thus, not only I recognize His presence everywhere, I become a full time devotee, and the actions and the role that I play become devoted actions and devoted role. Then karma becomes karma yoga. Every action becomes a yagna, or for yagna, since yagna also means the Lord. 'yagno yagnapatiH yagvaa yagnaago yagnavaahanaH' says in Vishnu sahasra naamaaval i. Hence, do the actions in the spirit of yagna also implies do the action for parameswara preetyartham – perform the action to please the Lord. Even while chanting the Vishnu sahasra naamaaval i, we chant – Shree maha Vishnu preetyartham – for the pleasure of mahaavishnu only we are chanting this and not for our personal gains. Whatever that comes unasked is received with reverence as 'prasaadam' .

How do I become a full time devotee? Swami Dayanandaji used to tell a story. There was young boy who was hired as cook by a gentleman. Since the boy was very much interested in music, he used to hum and sing as he was cooking. Since he was a good cook, the gentleman did not mind his singing. When a visitor came and heard the singing, he asked the gentleman – "who is singing in the kitchen?" The gentleman responded, "Oh! That is my cook. He likes to sing". The visitor said, "He is good, why don't you let him learn music?". The gentleman agreed and arranged for music lessons for the cook. Because of his interest, the boy practiced a lot and slowly graduated from that teacher and then the next teacher and so on until he became an expert in music. He became a professional singer much sought after for music programs. Once he had a program in the same town where the gentleman is living, and he visited him to pay his respects. Since he knows the gentleman's tastes, he went into the kitchen to cook something for him. When a visitor asked who is cooking in the kitchen, the gentleman responded, "Oh! That is the famous musician who cooking in the kitchen". The visitor was very much surprised why the famous musician is cooking in the gentleman's kitchen.

Before it was a cook that was singing – now the great musician is cooking. Whatever he does now, it is that great musician that is doing. The transformation is complete. A cook is transformed into a great musician – How? It is only by saadhana, that involves a single pointed effort withdrawing from all other dissipative pursuits.

ananyaashchi tayanto maam ye janaah paryupaasate|
teshaam ni tyaabhi yuktaanaam yogakshemam vahaamyaham||
without any other thought in mind who thinks of me all the time and
worships me, desiring nothing, I will take care of him completely.

Thus, doing daily prayer and performing the panca mahaayagnas, meditating on the glories of the Lord are essentially the process to transform oneself into a full time devotee. Krishna emphasizes that 'abyaasa and viaragya' i.e. constant practice and detachment from all other dissipative pursuits, are the two essential tools for one's growth.

Therefore, bhakti manifests at the action level as karmayoga. I cannot but offer everything to him. Once I recognize that everything actually belongs to him, what is there left for me to offer. 'tvadi iyam vastu govi nda tubhyameva samarpaye', Oh! Lord this is all yours and I am offering it to you what belongs to you'. What I am offering then is only my notions that they are mine. Krishna understands our language and takes only our devotion and returns back what He thinks we need for our growth.

End of Part V

From: kuntimaddi sadananda <kuntimaddisada@yahoo.com>
Date: Mon Jan 2, 2006 5:52 am
Subject: On Karma Yoga: VI - Choiceless Choice

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Choiceless choice:

After reading the last post, Shree Rajesh Ramachander asked some relevant questions starting from - what should guide our choice of action and what are its consequences? Before we address these issues, it is important to recapitulate from the second chapter of Geeta the fundamental law of action that Krishna provides.

'karmaNyevaadhi kaaraste maa phal eshu kadaachana|
maakarma phal aheturbhuuH maate sangostvakarmaNi ||
Recognize that you have only right (choice) to perform an action and
never in the results. Do not let the fruits of the action motivate your

action. Also, do not let your attachment be towards inaction.

The first part contains the law of action and the second part contains some guidelines to follow. Let us examine the law of action first. adhi kaari is normally translated as right, whereas in the context here, 'choice' is more meaningful as we shall see.

Human being is a crown in the creation since he is given a choice to evolve rapidly. What makes him to standout among the creation? It is the discriminative intellect or buddhi, which is the most precious gift to humans. BartRi hari subhaashhi tam says:

ahaara ni draa bhaya mai tunamca saamaanya metad pashhubhi rnaraaNam|
buddhi rhi teshaa adhi ko vi sheshhaH, buddhyaa vi hi i naaH pashubhi H
samaanaaH||

Eating, sleeping, being afraid, producing, etc are all common for both humans and animals. Humans have something more than what the animals have, and that is the discriminative intellect or buddhi. If one does not have it (or use it properly), then he is as good as any animal. However, animals are pre-programmed and follow the path specified by the Lord; whereas a man without buddhi will behave like unprogrammed animal, which is worse than an animal. animal does not become a Rakshasa. Man alone has the capacity to become either sura or asura, godly or devilish being.

Hence, Shankara says in Vi vekachuuDaamaNi that three things in the order are rare indeed. First is the birth in the human form. It is not a choice but a gift. Having been given such a rare birth, the second difficult thing to have is the intense desire for liberation. Krishna gives a statistics -

manushyaaNaam sahasreshhu kaschi dyatati siddhaye|
yatataamapi siddhaanaam kaschi nmaam vetti tatvataH|
Only one in thousand people try to reach me. Of those who try, only one in many will know Me by complete surrender.

Finally, the third one is the association with a great soul or right guru who can provide the needed guidance for evolution. These three come only because of the blessings from the Gods.

durlabham trayamevai tad dai vaanugraha hetukam|
munushyatvam mumukshutvam mahaapurushha samsrayaH||

Animals are mostly driven by instincts. Birds build their nests exactly the same way and that skill is in born. Their actions are dictated by instincts. On the other hand, since a superior intellect is provided for a human being, a man has to make a choice at every moment. He always has three choices at any time: to act, not to act and to act in a different way – kartum shakyam, akartum shakyam or anyathaa kartum shakyam- are the three choices. Hence, not to act is also a choice of action that he can exercise. People complain that they do not have any

choice. What they really mean is that they do not have a choice since they want to have only a particular desired result.

The first line of the above well quoted Geeta sloka says that at every moment I have a choice to make. In fact I have no choice but to choose. As an intelligent being, I always act expecting a desired result. I cannot act without any expectation. I cannot even put a step forward without expecting to move forward. I may fall in the process; but that is the result but not my expectation. Even Krishna does not begin to teach Arjuna without at least expecting Arjuna to learn. That is the least expectation. Hence, human intellect cannot function without a goal in mind, which is the expectation for the action. However, if I am intelligent enough I should also expect that my expectation could go wrong. Why? Because, I am not omniscient to dictate the result to meet my expectation. Hence Krishna says "you have only choice in action and never in the results". You can only choose how to act but never can choose the result you are going to get. Let us illustrate with an example. Let us say I have a big stone in my hand. I have a choice – I can throw that stone to the left side, to the right, throw up and pray it will not fall on my head, or throw in the back or just not throw anywhere at all. These are some of the choices I have. However, once I perform an action – say throw the stone up, I cannot determine its result. I cannot control its trajectory. I can pray the Lord to freeze the stone hanging in the air so that it would not fall on my baldhead. That prayer is also a course of action that I can choose to make. It may or may not give the desired result. The trajectory of the stone, however, is determined by the gravitational force, Newton's laws of action and frictional forces, etc. I cannot mend or amend those laws to suite the results that I want, since I am not the author of those laws. They are part of the creation and Lord is the author of these laws that dictate the result of my action. Hence, Krishna says 'you have only a choice in the action, but never in the result. The results are given by Me since I am the author of these laws. (Hence Lord is called karma phala data, giver of the fruits of action). You have to take whatever the result that comes'. I can demand or pray the Lord to change the Newton's laws, at least once for my sake, since I have been very devoted Bhakta all my life, and have been contributing in this advancement since its inception. However, Krishna says; Samo2ham sarva bhuteshu name dveshyo2ati na priyam| - I am impartial to everybody, I have no liking for any one nor hatred for any one. Whether one prays or not, whether one is a devotee or even non-believer, Krishna is impartial. Just as gravitational forces act impartially whether I believe in it or not whether I pray it four times a day or not. I have to use my intelligence to learn the laws and think how I can make use of these laws to my advantage. Hence Krishna says: "ye bhajanti tu maa bhaktyaa mayi te teshu chaapyaham – whoever worships me with devotion they are with me and I am also with them – Those who understand the laws of nature and operate correctly they are in union with Me and I also bless them appropriately". Therefore, I have no choice than to learn to

accept the results as given by the laws of nature. In the 18th, Ch. Krishna gives more details of all the factors that enter in formulating the results of an action.

Having a stone in my hand for me to choose the course of action is my praarabda and what kind of action I do with the stone that I have in my hand is my purushhaartha. Furthermore, after I receive the results, what I do next with the results that I have and the next set of choices that are open to me will determine my next course of action. Hence I am at cross roads all the time, where I have to choose – to do, not to do or do it another way. Swami Chinmayanandaji puts this beautifully – 'What I have is praarabda and what I do with what I have is purushhaartha'.

Future praarabda is nothing but past praarabda modified by my present action. If the result is not meeting my expectation, then by observing the action and the result, I can deduce how the laws of nature act and devise the next course of action that is more conducive to meet my expectations. There also, I have only choice in the action. If an action is performed, you can try to alter the results of the previous action by performing another action – that is called praayaschitta karma. There again the choice in the action is only ours but not in the results.

Another way of looking at this law of action is that I can only act in the present. Past is gone and there is nothing I can do about it. I can sit down and cry about it but that crying is also my present action. The future has not yet come for me to act. I can plan for the future, but that planning is also a present action. Hence, I can act only in the present. The results of an action follow the action and not precede it. Thus, results are future to the action. I cannot do anything about the future. Therefore, I have no control on the results, maa phal eshu kadaachana.

As a digression, an interesting point to note is that I can act only in the present and I can enjoy only in the present. In fact, I can live only in the present. Present only is given to me in a silver plate for me to act and to enjoy. Past always remains past and future is always in future, while I live only in the present. Unfortunately, we refuse to live in the present. We live either in the past (regrets of the past) or in the future (anxiety about the future) and not in the present. When someone asks 'who are you?' – We answer, giving our whole Bio-data; it is all about my accomplishments in the past and my aspirations about my future, but nothing about the present. On the other hand, a sage or wise man lives in the present. Interestingly, we cannot even define that present also. Present is a thin imaginary gap where the past meets the future. I can subdivide that gap as small as possible, microseconds, nano seconds, pico seconds, etc. Ultimately, the concept of time itself evaporates. What remains in the present is only my presence, which is beyond any concept of time. The movement of that

imaginary line creates the concept of time, which is only imaginary. Actually, the concept of space and time arises in me only, and it is folded when I go deep sleep state.

Efficiency in action:

Efficiency is different from proficiency. A doctor may be most proficient surgeon in the world, yet his efficiency goes down the drain if the patient on the operating table is his own beloved son. The attachment makes his intellect blind and makes him inefficient. Arjuna had the same problem. Hence, perform the action, without any attachment for the fruits of the action. There are three channels through which our energy gets dissipated while performing an action. One is the regrets of the past, second is the excitement while acting in the present and the third is the anxiety about the future. I can optimize my energy in the present action and perform to my best by arresting all three channels of energy leak. I will be most efficient in my action and that happens when I perform the action as an offering to the Lord. Even though Lord provides the results impartially whether I offer or not, but recognizing His role and offering the action itself as a prayer, I ensure that I perform the action to the best that I can. Secondly, Krishna says if it done in the spirit of yagna then the action will not bind us.

Right Choice of action:

The questioner asked, since I have no choice but to choose, what should be the right choice of action, or what should guide my choice of action. Since what I have is prarabdha and what I do with what I have purushhaartha, I should know what is right purushhaartha that determines my right choice of action. The scriptures provide the primary guidelines. The four purushhaartha-s that scripture provides is dharma, artha, kaama and moksha. Artha and karma, earning wealth and fulfilling the desires are bounded first by dharma and with a goal in moksha. What is my dharma? We have discussed this aspect before in terms of what is my swadharma. We can give a simple rule to guide what is the right course of action.

Whatever I expect others to do to me, I should do that to others.
Whatever I expect others not to do to me, I should not do to others.
This is a basic ethical and intelligent living and dharma for humanity itself (animals do not need dharma – they have no choice but to live by dharma). For example, I want others to be good to me, treat me kindly, compassionate towards me, forgive my mistakes, help me when I am in need, etc. Then I have to be good to them, treat them kindly, compassionate towards them, forgive their mistakes, help them when they are in need; these become my dharma. Similarly, I expect others not to lie to me, not to steal my property, not to hurt me, not to step over me for their needs, etc then I should not do those to others. One need not

be religious to follow these simple ethical principles. By following, these ethical principles my mind is purified and it brings in healthy attitude in life. At any time before getting action, think what would I expect others do or not to do if they are in the same situation. That forms my swadharma – since I have a value for those set of actions. As grow and learn, my intellect becomes more and more sensitive to other's needs and my actions will be governed by what is right rather than what I feel like doing.

The next level of dharma is to follow the sanaatana dharma what is wrongly translated as Hinduism. It is not an 'ism' but a way of life to appreciate my role in the creation. That involves the panca bhuta yagnas to appreciate my inheritance in this earth. I am born in a culture and tradition that is centered on the moksha as the eternal goal of life. Every art – dance, music, education, festivals, etc- all centered on guiding me towards higher values of life. I have to begin to recognize that I am a full time devotee as we discussed before. Performing the action as a prayer to the Lord becomes my attitude in the action. Every act that emanates from me becomes a devoted action, whether it is in the temple or outside the temple, since I recognize that Lord is everywhere and in every set-up. adhaarmic choices of action, I would not even entertain, since those will hurt me more than they will hurt others. Whatever I offer to the Lord has to be immaculately pure and noble and to the best that I could do since I am offering to the Lord of the entire universe. That is what devotion calls for and the choice of action is dictated by those values. Krishna gives exhaustive details of the values that one should follow in several chapters of Geeta. These help to purify myself. These include the right course of action that I should do and food that I should eat etc, all discussed in the 18th Ch. of Geeta. Prof. VK has discussed these exhaustively and one can get that information from his web site.

How do I know that a particular action is dhaarmic action or not? This is the problem with Arjuna also? I do not know what my dharma is – "Hai Krishna I am your student, please teach me. I will follow whatever you instruct me" – was the outcry of Arjuna. First, by education I learn what is right and what is wrong. Education from parents, from teachers and from noble persons, I learn what is the right choice of action. Scriptures teach us what is the right course of action. Ultimately, Guru teaches us, what is the right course of action, provided one becomes a disciple just as Arjuna did. If none of these available, just surrender to the Lord and do what you think is the right course of action taking it as Lord's dictate. Know that wherever dharma is Lord is, and wherever Lord is dharma is.

As long as I have the notion that I am doer (kartRi tva bhaava), I have to do my best in any action that I undertake in the spirit of yagna. As long as I have a feeling that I am the doer, the results belong to me along with the associated impressions or vasanaas-s. When I do the

action in the attitude of yagna, then the results are neutralized since I accept the results as prasaadam. My attitude is only service and results are not the motivating force. Hence, Krishna advises in the sloka do not let fruits of the action motivate your action. More than that, if my vision is in the results, my mind is already in the future since results are future to the action. Therefore, the mind is not available for the action that is being done in the present. I have to engage all the equipments that I have – body, mind and intellect-completely and fully in the action for it to become a devoted action, in the spirit of yagna. In addition, inaction is not the choice either.

Therefore, Krishna advises that everyone to be participant in the eternal wheel of action. There are only few exceptions to this rule and that we will discuss in the next post.

From: kuntimaddi sadananda <kuntimaddisada@yahoo.com>
Date: Wed Jan 4, 2006 5:25 am
Subject: On Karma Yoga: VII - Loka KalyaaNam

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Krishna discussed that everyone has to do Karma yoga and in fact, everyone has to be part of the eternal wheel of action. That involves performing the action in the spirit of yagna to please the gods. The gods so pleased will bless with the appropriate results, which should be distributed in proportion to individual contributions. The individuals in turn take only what they need and put the remaining back again into the totality for the benefit of the society in the form of yagna to please the gods again. Thus, the eternal wheel of action is set in motion with everyone participating in it. We have defined Gods as the production potential in the field of action and yagna as the cooperative endeavor in complete self-sacrificing mode for the benefit of the totality. The wheel of action thus sets in motion the eternal re-cycling of resources and their regeneration thus conserving and protecting the nature for generations to come. Balance of natural resources is maintained by the wheel of action involving continuous re-cycling process in the spirit of yagna. Degradation of individual as well as the society occurs when this eternal wheel of action established by the creator himself at the time of creation is not followed. This happens when the individuals and the nations become selfish and try to destroy others and the Nature for their own selfish ends. In this system, no one has any rights, but everyone has duties to perform. Others' duties effectively become our rights. For example, others' duty not to steal my property effectively becomes my right for my property. Confirming to one's duty is more a norm than demanding for one's rights. Most importantly, those who act in this yagna spirit and thus participate in the eternal wheel of action; the actions do not bind them. The actions will only glorify them. On the other hand, Krishna warns that those that do not follow this spirit of yagna and thus do not contribute to

the wheel of action, they get bound and fall into the endless ocean of samsara. Natural disasters also follow at macro level when the ecological balance is disturbed by industrial pollution of air and water and global warming. Thus, Krishna provides a completely new vision expanding the conventional meaning of Yagna, homa and karma known to the Vedic periods into new heights. In the fourth chapter, He describes various types of yagnas that one can do in self-sacrificing mode for one's spiritual saadhana. Of many types of yagnas, Krishna says jnaana yagna is the supreme, based on which Chinmaya Mission started jnaana yagna series to disseminate scriptural knowledge at a global level.

shreyaan dravyamayaadyaj naat jnaanayagnaH parantapa|
sarvam karmaakhi I am paarthaa jnaane pari samaapyaate||
Oh! Arjuna! of all the yagnas, that involve offering materials, offering knowledge as yagna or jnaana yagna is the most supreme. Because, all the vaasanas born out of karmas get neutralized or annihilated by the knowledge.

Exceptions to the rule:

Krishna says everyone should work in the spirit of yagna and contribute to the wheel of action. There are, however, some exceptions to this rule. Those who do not depend on things other than themselves have no obligatory duties to perform – they have realized their essential nature and thus are firmly established in their knowledge. They are sthitapragna-s, who revel in themselves by themselves (aatmanyeva atmanaa tushhTaH). They recognized that happiness is not 'out there', but happiness comes within and in fact it is their very nature. Obligatory duties arise when I am dependent on the things, places and/or people, or in short something other than myself for my happiness. I search for happiness outside only when I realize that I am unhappy. If I recognize that my nature is happiness itself, then, there is no reason for me to look for happiness outside. I do not need to depend on anything to gain happiness. Dependence on anything other than myself for my happiness is bondage. Karma is done in the spirit of yagna to relieve oneself from bondage. If one is already liberated then spirit of yagna is redundant.

Hence Krishna says:

yatsvaatmarati revasyaat aatma tRi ptasya maanavaH|
aatmanyevaca santushhTaH tasya kaaryam na vi dyate||

nai va tasya kRi tenaartha naakRi teneha kaschana|
na caasya sarvabhuuteshhu kashci darthavyapaashrayaH||

Whoever revels in himself and is completely contended in himself or with himself fully, with no other desire for anything else, for him there are no obligatory duties.

For such a person, there is nothing he is going to gain in this world by

performing any action, nor there is nothing to loose by not performing. In addition, he has no self-interest in any relationship with any other beings in this world, for his happiness. In essence, he has no obligations to the people, places or things for his happiness. If at all he does any action, he does it out of pure love or compassion, just as King Janaka, who was self-realized soul lived in olden days.

Here Krishna says obligatory duties arise because of one's dependence on things other than himself. The truth about happiness is stated simply as:

sarvam paravasham duHkham sarvam aatmavasham sukham|
etat vi dyaa samaasena IakshaNam sukha duHkhayoH||

There are many theories about happiness or what is happiness. But here is the definition in essence – Sorrow is the dependence on anything other than oneself and happiness is independence from any dependence on anything other than oneself. When there is dependence, there is an expectation, disappointments and sorrow. Excessive dependence and disappointments can also result in anger and frustration, and in the moments of anger one acts devilish, contrary to his own nature.

If we are source of happiness and still we are looking for it outside, it only means that we are not aware of our own true nature. Thus, ignorance of our true nature is the root cause for looking out for happiness, and dependence on things other than oneself. Hence, reveling oneself in oneself is a natural state while reveling on something other than oneself thinking that it gives happiness is unnatural. The happiness that one gets even fulfilling one's desire for objects or people is also short lived since in fulfilling those desires the happiness that one gains is only from his own self. One-desire props up many other desires thus keeping the mind in constant agitation, thus depriving ones happiness.

However Krishna says, even if one has realized and does not have any obligations and do not depend on anything else for his happiness, it is better to act rather than remain inactive. The reason is others try to follow him wrongly without having gained the self-knowledge. Hence, Krishna says:

yadyadaacari ti shreshhTaH tattaddevetaro janaH|
sa yatpramaaNam kurute Iokostaduvartate||

whatever a noble person does the other people try to follow him. Whatever he does, he sets an example for others to follow. Therefore, even a realized person should act, not for his sake, but for the benefit of the people or for loka kalyaanam. Krishna gives his own life as an example. "There is nothing in the three worlds that I need to gain or to avoid, but still I am involved continuously. If I don't do it, then

others try to follow me and become inactive. Hence if I do not act, I become indirectly the cause for their destruction. Therefore Arjuna, the realized sages, even if they are not keenly interested in any action since they have nothing to gain, they still have to act for the benefit of the humanity or for loka kalyaanam.

Thus we have three classes people: (a) Common people who are predominantly ignorant of their true nature, (b) mumukshuH or seeker of self-knowledge who have gained the requisite qualifications of mental purity to pursue self-knowledge, and c) realized masters who have gained the self-knowledge. The first set of people are the majority, and have to do Karma yoga with the spirit of yagna. Here there is no choice whether to do or not to do karma yoga, or to choose karma yoga or jnaana yoga as Arjuna posed the question. The jnaanis who have realized, need not have to do any karma for their own happiness. Krishna, however, recommends that they should involve themselves to set an example for the masses. Since they have no self-centered desires to act, whatever they do will be for the benefit of the totality or loka kalyaanam. Now, the second set of people who have purified their minds with karma yoga, or have acquired the saadhana chatushTAM or four fold qualifications – what do they have to do. For them Veda-s recommend, shravaNa, manana and ni dhi dhyaaasana. Paramaarthaanandaji defines shravaNa as a systematic and consistent study of Vedantic scriptures for a length of time, under the guidance of a competent teacher. Here every word is important. A competent teacher is one who was once a competent disciple, who himself has learned from a competent teacher. Thus, there is guru-shishya parampara or lineage of teacher-taught. A systematic teaching follows a sampradaaya or traditional teaching method since the subject is very subtle. SravaNa will give aatmajnaanam or knowledge of oneself. The next is mananam. It is meant for removing all the doubts. When the student hears from the teacher 'you are that' or 'you are brahman', it appears to be impossible to accept by any rational intellect until he learns that the truth is beyond the rational intellect. 'nai shhaa tarkena matir aapanya', 'truth cannot be established by logical or intellectual analysis' says kathopanishat . mananam is required to remove the mental obstruction to accept the Vedantic truths. 'mananena samshaya nivRittiH'. Once the mind is convinced without any doubts left, then comes the ni dhi dhyaaasanam – it is a process of internalization of the teaching by dwelling upon the doubt-free knowledge using any of the following methods: studying, writing, repeated listening, discussing, teaching, etc. or meditating or contemplating on the truth in the direction pointed out by the scriptures or any combination of them or all of the above. Internalization is the de-conditioning process to remove conditioning. 'I am de-facto jiiva' is my current conditioning. My entire life style is driven by this conditioning – or I should say I have lived many lives with that conditioning. Hence this conditioning is very deep rooted. We are not changing the conditioning by a new conditioning as JK's talks indicate but questioning the very foundation on which these deep rooted

conditioning that aham jiivaH or I am limited jiiva is established. This questioning or inquiry is done using the Vedanta as pramaana or using the scripture as the basis since Vedanta provides a different vision of myself, which is different from the notions that I have about myself.

It is obvious that shravaNa, manana and ni dhi dhyaasana cannot be done effectively while indulging in worldly duties. The recommendation is to minimize the later as much as one can and involve oneself to the maximum possible in the pursuit of moksha as the fourth and final purushhaartha. As mentioned before, during the marriage time we take our spouses to fulfill the first three purushhaartha-s- dharma, artha and kaama. For moksha each one is on their own, since this involves a dhyaanam or contemplation on the truth. Moksha is not going somewhere or doing something but being established in what you are in relation to what you think you are. All relations are dropped since the truth is beyond any relations and relatives. Incidentally, the relations established by marriage are called sambandhi-s – those who provide the total bondage (samyak bandhanam). Truth involves freedom from all bondages or all relatives (dualities) or sambandhi-s! In that case sanyaasa aashrama provides a conducive environment for the single-pointed contemplation, provided the mind is relatively purified from attachments. Otherwise, one can still do ni dhi dhyaasana while remaining in gruhasta aashrama, minimizing as much as possible the worldly involvement. For such seekers, karmayoga is then part of jnaana yoga and not separate from it, since studying, writing, teaching, and contemplation all involves actions. Thus, karmayogis graduate to jnaana yoga once the mind becomes pure with less desires and hence less agitations, and thus is available for inquiry.

Arjuna asks next a pertinent question – why after studying and knowing that happiness is not out there, people still go after the worldly pleasures even against their own convictions. Krishna addresses this issue in the next post.

From: kuntimaddi sadananda <kuntimaddisada@yahoo.com>
Date: Sun Jan 8, 2006 3:10 am
Subject: Karma yoga - Part VIII: The Two Great Enemies

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The two great enemies:

After discussing elaborately the Karma yoga, Krishna gives a stern warning to humanity. Those who follow my advise and do karma yoga, they ultimately reach Me, enjoying the eternal unlimited happiness. But those who disrespect Me and do not follow My advise, they get more and more deluded and perish engulfed by their own extreme stupidity. They go down the drain buried in samsaara. Here, disrespecting Him means

disrespecting the totality by catering only for one's egocentric desires even at the expense of the rest.

ye tvetad abhyasuyanto naanuti shhTanti me matam|
sarvaj naana vi muuDhaastaan vi ddhi nashhTaanaCetasah||

Obviously, Arjuna wants to know what makes the people commit such sins, even after knowing very well that it would ultimately hurt them.

Arjuna's question is very pertinent to all of us. We see ourselves doing things we know that we should not be doing and we even advise others not do, yet we cannot stop ourselves from doing. It is like a cardiologist who is himself overweight and a chain smoker advises his patients not to overeat and not to smoke, since they are bad for the heart.

There was interesting episode attributed to Shree Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Once a disciple of Shree Ramakrishna brought his son to his guru and requested him to talk to his son. The son was eating too many sweets, and the father knew that if Paramahansa instructs his son not to eat sweets, out of respect, his son would listen and follow. Paramahansa asked him to come back after a month with his son, and at that time he can instruct the boy. The disciple wondering why he had to wait for one month for such a simple instruction, returned with his son after a month. Paramahansa called his son aside and said "My child, do not eat sweets. They are not good for you". The boy hesitatingly agreed but promised that he would not eat sweets anymore. The disciple asked Paramahansa, "Sir, this simple instruction could have been given earlier. Why did you wait for a month?" Paramahansa, smilingly replied, "I could have given at that time, but that would not be meaningful. I could not instruct the boy not to eat sweets earlier, since I myself was eating sweets that are not good for me. It took a month for me to stop the craving for sweets. Now, only I could give such an instruction". yadyat aacharati shreshhTah ..." whatever the elders do the children also follow. For parents, it is important to learn that the only way the children will learn is by setting themselves as an example. Not only will they learn, they themselves will teach their children by their own example. For example, it will be meaningless to ask a child not to watch TV while the parents themselves keep watching. Unfortunately, we find ourselves doing things we know that they are not good for us. We essentially compromise our values, while at the same time insist that others should follow them. It is like the lawmakers violating the law that they passed. Krishna calls us mi thyaachari-s or hypocrites. What Arjuna asked was a universal problem.

Krishna answers:

kaama yeshha krodha yeshha rajoguNasamudbhavaH|
mahaashano mahaapaapmaa vi ddhyenami ha vai ri Nam||

Desire and anger born out of rajoguna are the two powerful forces that

propel an individual to engage in inappropriate or adharmaic action. Desire is a reflection of a sense of incompleteness, apoorvavatam. Even though the scripture says, I am puurnah or complete or an adequate person, I feel I am incomplete and inadequate. Hence, I go after objects, places and/or people to make myself an adequate person or full. When I go after the objects or people, the enjoyment leaves subtler impressions in the mind called vaasanaas, which manifest as raga-dveshas or likes and dislikes. These vaasanaas subsequently manifest as desires at the intellect level, causing agitations at mental level and actions at the body level. The very presence of desires disturbs the mind by creating a sense of incompleteness or inadequacy. In addition, the desires have ingenious capacity to multiply themselves. Someone has defined the peace of mind as the ratio of number of desires fulfilled to number of desires one has. By this equation, as one gets older, one should be peaceful, since with age the number of desires fulfilled should increase. The problem, however, is that the denominator i.e. the number of desires that one has does not remain constant, since with each desire fulfilled there will be mushroom of many desires that germinate. Hence, attempt to get happiness by fulfilling desires is a losing battle. Krishna calls it as mahaashanaH, the one whose hunger increases with each feed like the fire being put out by pouring gasoline.

Another problem is intense desire is slowly converted to greed (lobha), since one cannot satiate by fulfilling the desire. A greedy person tends to violate dharma, since a greedy person cannot fulfill his desire by legitimate means. In addition, a greedy person does not like to part with whatever he/she has, nor would like to share with others. The immediate result is he fails to perform the panca mahaayagnas that involve sharing with those who are less fortunate. Only solution is to eliminate the desires not by suppressing but by sublimating them. This can be done by snipping them in the bud when they first arise in the intellect using the very intellect. If I have desires for sweets and am diabetic, then I have to sublimate the desire for sweets by intellectually convincing that it is not good for my health. Since total elimination of all desires is difficult proposition, as we discussed earlier, we can neutralize those by bringing Iswara and offering them to Him as naivedyam. However, once offered to the Lord, they come back from the Lord as prasaadam, which has to be shared with everybody. One cannot be greedy with prasaadam. In the process, the desires are neutralized by Lord's touch and they become vehicles to share with everyone, thus contributing to pancha yagnas.

The second enemy that Krishna mentions is anger. The desire itself transforms into anger when the object desire is obstructed by something or some other person. Anger makes a person to act impulsively. It suppresses the discriminative faculty and creates a turbulent mind. In anger one is even ready to abuse one's own mother or teacher. In the second chapter Krishna discussed exhaustively how desires germinate and grow in an individual and how it could contribute to one's downfall.

(dhyaaayato vi shhayaan). In essence, by constant thinking of an object causes desires for the object, desire can lead to anger, anger to delusion, delusion to loss of memory, loss of memory to loss of discriminative intellect and ultimately falls down into a whirlpool of samsara. One can use the mechanism to reverse the process, to help saadhak in his evolution. By constant thinking of the Lord, one develops love for the Lord, which provides a quiet mind (this is where love for an object differs from love for the Lord since the later lifts ones mind higher). Shankara provides this evolution process beautifully in Bhajagovindam:

sat sanghatve ni ssanghatvam ni ssanghatve ni rmohatvam|
ni rmohatvam ni scal a tatvam ni scal atave j i i vanmuktaH||

Association with sat sangha or noble people or thoughts will lead to detachment, detachment leads to lack of delusion and lack of delusion leads to steady mind and steady mind will lead to liberation. Thus, desire for the higher sublimates all other desires and contributes one's evolution.

While discussing that desire (kaama) and krodha (anger) are two enemies, Krishna uses a singular word, vaari Nam rather than vaari Nou. The implication is that desire and anger are not two separate forces since one leads to the other. Hence, controlling one is as good as controlling the other. Krishna says later that one who can manage to control the onslaught of these two, desire and anger, is the person who is really a yogi and is the person who will attain the absolute happiness (shaknotii hai vayashhoDum.....).

Since both are related, Krishna discusses further how to manage the desires since managing desires would also help managing anger. Three methods are suggested which are based on the hierarchical structure of the human psychology. In the body-mind-intellect complex, the mind is superior to body and intellect is superior to the mind. Superior of all is the self. Thus, Krishna says:

indri yaaNi paraaNyaahuH indri yebhyaH param manaH|
manastu paraa buddhi H yobuddheH parastu saH||

In this hierarchical structure, one can think of intellect as the officer, mind as the chief clerk, and the sense organs and organs of action as workers. A proper management of the whole system involves a proper chain of command with intellect to mind to sense organs. Such a chain of command results in 'aarjavam' or straightforwardness, a value that Krishna says needed for spiritual growth. Yoga integrates the individual and establishes this chain of command. For a yogi, what he thinks, what he feels, what he says and what he does are all aligned. If mind overpowers the intellect, this chain of command becomes crooked resulting in crooked personality. That person does as he feels like rather than what is right (which his intellect knows). When the mind and intellect diverges, the actions become irrational and that is what is

defined as sin. Sin is the degree of divergence of mind and intellect. Karma yoga helps to integrate the personality of the individual so that proper chain of command is established by aligning the mind and intellect so that there is no split personality or crookedness. For spiritual growth, the discipline is very important – this is stated in terms of yama and niyama, which are essentially do-s and don't-s. This involves a three-prong approach. The first is control at the level of sense organs (indriya nigraha), next at the control of the mind (mano nigraha) and finally at the intellect level using viveka, using the discriminative faculty. These are also discussed in term of shamaadi shat sampatti – the group of six starting from shama, considered also as divai sampatti. Thus at sense level, avoidance of situations that tempt illegitimate or unhealthy desires – this is also called dama. At the mind level, controlling the mental indulgence so that they do not develop into vasanas (shama). Thus, undesirable (adharmaic) thoughts are discouraged by substituting with noble thoughts (dharmaic). At the intellect level one needs to perform critical analysis of the purpose and goal of human life and redirecting the mind away from dissipating pursuits. This in management techniques is called prioritizing ones goals and synchronizing the actions towards the goals. If one cannot manage oneself as an integrated personality, the management outside becomes even more difficult. It is like marriage counselors trying to council the other married couple while his own marriage is in turmoil. Hence, Vedic management techniques start at an individual level. They start at childhood or brahmachari level than at later stages when it becomes even more difficult to control.

Depending on the degree of the intensity of the desires, to that degree discriminative intellect is empowered. We need to decrease the quantity, quality and the direction of desires. The desires rob one's mind away from oneself. Hence, Krishna says the shitaprajnaa is the one who has shunned away all desires from his mind (sarvaan kamaan prajahaati) and finds happiness in himself. Karma yoga helps in neutralizing all the desires by surrendering to the Lord. They become like snakes whose poison has been removed. Lord Shiva uses them as ornaments (phannaga bhushhaNa) and Lord Vishnu uses as a bed (phannaga shaayi). With the saadhana the desire is neutralized and the mind becomes purer and purer. Krishna compares the covering of the intellect by the desires just as the smoke covering the fire, or dust covering the mirror or the placenta covering the fetus. Just blowing wind is sufficient to remove the smoke, whereas one has to do little bit more work to remove the dust from the mirror to see oneself clearly. Finally one has to wait for 9 to 10 months for the placenta to drop off. Thus depending on the degree of the intensity of the desires one has to make an effort to purge them out of the system.

Thus Krishna identifies who are the real enemies for humanity and how to get rid of them. The saadhana is not meant for realization, but for purification of the mind. 'cittasya shuddhaye karma na tu vastuupal abdhaye'. Karma yoga helps in purifying the mind and thus

prepares the mind for jnaana yoga.

In the next post we discuss how a jnaani acts.

From: kuntimaddi sadananda <kuntimaddisada@yahoo.com>
Date: Fri Jan 27, 2006 7:03 am
Subject: Karma yoga IX: Evolution via Karma yoga

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Stages of Karma yoga:

For convenience, we can think of three stages in Karma yoga. We recognize that to transform karma into yoga we need to bring Iswara. Iswara means the Lord who is the author of this entire universe. People consider some things as man-made and some things as natural. There is nothing that is really man-made. The possibilities for a man to make and the laws governing making (as well as for breaking) are already available in nature. Man only discovers and makes use of these laws and creates or assembles using his intelligence. The creation is only an intelligent assemblage of existing matter since both matter and energy are conserved in nature. Krishna provides in the second chapter an absolute law of conservation. 'naasato vیدyate bhaavo naabhaavo vیدyate sataH|' That which is non-existent cannot come into existence and that which is existent will not cease to exist'. Therefore Oh! Arjuna! There was never a time I was not there, never a time you were not there and these kings that we see in front. There will never be a time when they will cease to exist. Creation therefore cannot be something out of nothing but only a transformation of something into some other thing using the laws that are available already in nature. A scientist does not invent a law only discovers the law. The potential for modification or transformation already exists in the Nature, just as ornaments from gold. That is, gold has the capacity to transform into ornaments. The creative power arising from intellect is due to Iswara. Hence, Krishna says - 'buddhiH bhuddhimataam asmi' - I am the intelligence among the intellects.

There is a difference between action and labor. Intelligent action or purposeful action is karma in contrast to mechanical action, which constitutes labor. We do many actions mechanically, starting from getting up from bed to taking bath, cleaning, cooking, washing, walking (regular as well as for exercise), etc. Vedas considers these as part of samskaara karmas or purification rituals where a routine action is converted into a prayerful action.

Thus, even if there is routine obligatory action, engaging the available mind in thinking of the Lord is an intelligent way of performing that action. I remember my mother chanting Vi shunusaharanaama, Mukundamaala and other sthavas continuously while cooking and cleaning. This frees

the mind from indulging unnecessarily into the past (regrets of the past) and worries and anxieties about the future. Even though the chanting can become mechanical, the thinking about the Lord becomes a natural by the saadhana. Hence, Krishna says:

ananyacetaaH satatam yo maam smarati ni tyashaH|

tasyaaham sul abhaH paarthaa ni tyayuktasya yogi naH| 8-14

Whoever thinks of me all the time, without any other thoughts in his mind, and who yokes his mind fully to Me, he will reach Me easily. If one engages in thinking of Him all the time, he cannot but think of Him in the last moments while leaving this body, and whoever thinks of Me and nothing but Me, while departing his body, he cannot but reach Me alone, and there is no doubt about it—says Krishna.)

(antakaal epi ca maam eva smaran muktvaa kal ebaram,

yaH prayati sa madbhavaam yaati naastasya samshayaH|| 8-8)

This can be achieved by constant practice (abhyasa) and giving up the unnecessary indulgence of the mind in useless thoughts (vairagya or dispassion). Krishna stresses these two aspects again and again, constant practice, abhyasa, and dispassion, vairagya, as the essential ingredients for a success, in any field.

Nature of the mind:

If we examine the mind and see its operation, we find there are three distinct ways it engages itself. The mind is nothing but flow of thoughts, vRitti dhaara. Flow involves a direction. The direction is primarily set by the vaasanas, which manifest as desires at the intellect level, agitations at the mind level, and actions at the body level. As we discussed earlier, vaasanas only provide the environment for us to act, but as a human being with intelligence, we are given a choice to choose the direction of our thinking in spite of the pressure from the past. Thus, we are not just prisoners of our past but masters of our future. By redirecting the mind towards Him, we change our future vaasanas until our mind flows naturally towards Him. Of the three distinct ways the mind functions, the first and the most useless avocation of the mind is 'stray' thinking. Whenever one is functioning mechanically, the mind also functions in mechanically thinking, jumping from one thought to the other, one topic to another, without any pause. Ninety percent of the time, our minds, sometime even our conversations, are wasted in these unproductive engagements. This happens even when we sit for meditation as we are carried away by the thoughts without knowing how our minds were hijacked by our thoughts. For consistent flow of thoughts towards higher, a vigilant mind is needed. This can be achieved only by constant practice with full devotion towards the higher. For example, instead of listening to the junk music during a waking exercise, one can listen to the bhajan or to that which can direct the mind to higher. Some people put a tape recorder on but instead of listening, the mind slowly drifts back to 'stray' thinking. It is important therefore to engage both speech and the mind in chanting the prayers, particularly when one is involved in routine actions. By

Engaging the speech also in chanting His stava one avoids useless speech. The routine actions such as taking bath, taking food, etc. become yagnas, if we bring in the Lord.

There was once a drunkard who went to a priest and asked, 'Sir, can I drink while we are praying?' – The priest said, 'No. You should not do any other action that takes your mind away from the Lord'. The drunkard thought about it and changed his question. "Sir, Can I pray while I am drinking?". The priest said immediately, "Yes, you can always pray, whatever you are doing". Hence, Krishna says, "yat karoshi yat ashnaati ... tat kurushva madarpaNam" 9-27, whatever you do and whatever you eat, offer it to me with full devotion.

We discussed the mechanical thinking mind with stray thoughts. By disciplining our mind to bring in deliberately the name of the Lord while we are involved in mechanical actions, we curtail the mind from being carried by the 'stray' unproductive thoughts.

The second function of the mind is the objective thinking or intelligent thinking. This mind is useful mind that is needed for any inquiry. It is the discriminative mind, viveka, which is used for inquiry into the nature of Brahman. The objective mind can be classified into two types a) a sharp intellect, tiikshNa buddhi and b) a subtle intellect, suukshma buddhi. A sharp intellect as the name indicates is the mind that divides and analyzes the object. Hence, it is also termed as 'analytical mind'. All scientific investigations are done using this mind. In any objective field, the more one dissects and investigates the more the system reveals, and the field of investigation becomes narrower and narrower. One becomes a super specialist. Ultimately, in these investigations a stage comes where the field of investigation will be affected by the very process of investigation. Objective investigation becomes subjective in the sense that the observed data becomes subjective.

The subtle mind, suukshma buddhi, in contrast, is the mind that integrates or synthesizes. It is this mind that is called as Viveka. Viveka is defined as the mind that can discriminate the eternal from the ephemeral. It is the synthetic mind, which sees oneness in the plurality. It requires wisdom to see the oneness, which is changeless and eternal in the multitude of changing plurality. A mind that is fully detached and that has the equanimity to witness all turbulent onslaughts of ups and downs in life without getting affected by them. That mind has gained what Krishna calls as samatvam or equanimity. It is this mind that is capable of inquiring the highest nature of reality that goes beyond understanding. The mind is capable of inquiring even the notions about oneself and about the mind itself. It is this mind that discovers the truth about itself as well as about the objects and the associated thoughts. 'mana yeva manushyaanaam kaaraNam bandha mokshayo|'. Mind is responsible for both bondage and liberation. Mind

has the notions about one self, as I am this and this, etc. In the realization of oneself, the notional mind drops out leaving behind an objective mind, which has clear understanding of the true nature of oneself and still functions 'as though' it is mere equipment for the self, which is limitless and eternal.

There is the third type of mind or thought flow which is called a mind with aavesha or possessed mind. It is this mind that becomes a problematic mind. In the second chapter, Krishna warns how human mind can degrades itself by developing intense attachments. Krishna says by constant thinking about the object one develops a desire for the object, the desire can lead to anger when it is not fulfilled, anger leads to delusion, delusion leads to loss of discriminative intellect and makes one to perform actions that cause him complete downfall. One is 'possessed' with intense desire leading to intense anger or jealousy etc that drains the energies of the individual and makes him incapacitated. One can become neurotic with such a mind which requires even medical help to put it to rest since one has lost complete control of it. It is important to be attentive so that one does not get into such an irreparable damage. The medicine is as Shankara sates in bhajagovindam:
sat sanghatve nissanghatvam, nissagatve nirmohatvam|
nirmohatve nischala tatvam and nischala tatve jivan muktaH||

Mind associated with the good will lead to detachment, and detachment will lead to loss of delusion and loss of delusion will lead to mind in meditation and mind in meditation will lead to liberation. Thus, just as mind attached to lower will cause to downfall, the mind attached to higher will evolve to liberation. Hence, only way for the mind to go towards higher is to redirect the mind towards the higher so that notional mind can drop out in the understanding of the nature of the reality.

In the first stage of Karma yoga, we train the mind to recognize the higher nature of the reality and offer all the actions and thoughts to the Lord as naivedyam or kai karyam.

In the second stage of karma, yoga involves recognizing that He is the Lord of the entire universe and nothing moves without His support. He is like a thread that supports everything together as 'suatre mani gaNaa eva'. I am only His servant like an ambassador functioning on behalf of a Government. Ambassador does everything but only as the representator of the government only that which is beneficial to the Government that he is representing. In the same way, I have to perform all my actions that are beneficial to the Lord. Since Lord is everywhere and is not different from the totality, everything that benefits the totality is beneficial to the Lord. When you are taking care of the lowest of the lowest, you are taking care of Me, when you clothing the lowest of the lowest, you are clothing Me. When you are feeding the lowest of the lowest, you are feeding Me, says the Bible.

As the mind evolves and contemplates on the nature of the reality along the direction indicated by the Vedas that one recognizes that he is and was never a doer. The actions are done by the prakRiti itself in the presence of the Lord. If everything is Lord, and whatever that I can point out is nothing but the Lord, then this body, this mind and this intellect which are part of prakRiti and therefore belongs to the Lord and not to me. All actions are done by the body-mind-intellect complex that is enlivened by His presence. Hence, Lord says:

prakRitiH kriyamaanaaNi guNaH karmaaNi sarvashaH|

ahankaaravimuuDhaatmaa kartaa2hamati manyate|| 3-27

All actions are being done by the prakRiti propelled by its guNa (satva-raja-tamo guNa). However, the egocentric individual because of delusion says that he is the doer and claims that which does not belong to him and suffers the consequence of that misunderstanding. It is like a villager who traveled in a train. Feeling sorry for the train for carrying so much load, he wanted to share some burden of the train. Hence he kept his big luggage on his head while sitting in the train and traveling. He started complaining that that the luggage is too heavy for him to carry any further. That is exactly our status.

Recognition that prakRiti itself is performing the action in my presence becomes a knowledge. Although the appropriate actions are being performed in response to the situation through the body-mind-intellect complex, which is part of the prakRiti, there is no more delusion that I am the actor. 'akartaaham abhoktaaham ahamevaaham avyayaH' – I am neither a doer nor an enjoyer, I am that I am, that inexhaustible source of happiness that I am – will be the knowledge that arises in the realization of who I am. There is nothing for him to do since there is nothing he is going gain by doing or loose by not doing. If at all anything is done by that body-mind-intellect complex by the Lord, it is only for loka kalyaanam. That karma yogi evolves to jnaani who recognizes that he is never a doer while appropriate actions are being done in his presence.

Thus, karma yoga is needed to gain the jnaana yogyata, or to gain qualifications required to do jnaana yoga, and jnaana yoga is what helps to recognize that I am never a doer in spite of all the doings. Thus, there are three stages of karma yoga:

1. First recognition of role of the Lord and his presence in all my activities and offer all the actions as a prayer to the Lord. At this stage, there is still a notion that I am doer but I am doing as an offering to the Lord. Hence, I do my part my best in the spirit of yagna.
2. The second stage involves performance of the action as an ambassador or His trustee. This includes taking care of my spouse, my children, my office, and all my transactions. I am no more accountable for any of the actions, as long as I perform them as His representative. I have to make sure that 'His will' will be done and not mine.

3. The final stage is actually the culmination of the knowledge itself that I am and I never was a doer while all actions are being done in my presence. Krishna also provides this vision in the third chapter while discussing the karma yoga. This is the culmination of all understanding. The purpose of life itself is fulfilled. Whatever He does will only glorify the universe. He is called kRi takRi tyah, who accomplished what needs to be accomplished. 'kulam pavidram janani i kRi taarthaa vi shambraa punyavati ca tena' – The whole lineage is blessed by the presence of such great one, his mother is blessed for giving such a son of the world, and the whole universe is blessed by his presence. It is only the result of merits of many lives that one achieves that state of understanding.

This is the very purpose of life and any other pursuit in life is not worth the effort. Krishna assures that again that it is important to start the life of a karma yogi since even a little bit of effort in that direction will take us a long way.

nehaabhi kramanaashasti pratyavaayo na vidyate|

sval pamapyasya dharmasya traayate mahato bhayaat|| 2-40

Once one starts, the effects of this yoga gets compounded fast. Nothing gained will be lost if one could not pursue further and there will not any disastrous side effects either when one stops doing karma yoga. However if one does even a little bit, that will take him a long way in the pursuit of his ultimate goal. However, Krishna has already warned that it is not a choice. It is a choice less choice since if we do not perform with the attitude of karma yoga, we will get more and more entangled in the ocean of bondage and cause our own self-destruction. The choice is ours – says Krishna.

With this optimistic note and Krishna's warning, we end the discussion on Karmayoga, which I started writing after listening to Swami Paramaarthanandaji summary talk on Gita Ch. 3. Someone asked me how I could take so much notes in one hour class. I must say I have been blessed with the association of great souls starting from my own teacher, Gurudev H.H. Swami Chinmayanandaji, and many other swamis in and out of Chinmaya Mission. I try to avail every opportunity I can to listen to mahaatmas, and also avail every opportunity that I can to talk about it. Writing this notes in fact motivated me to write from Ch. 1 as Geeta Navanitam series. Let us see how He wants that to proceed.

My thanks to all those who provided me encouraging comments and this list moderators for providing me a vent for my expression.

Hari OM!
Sadananda
