

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 4: Jñāna-Karma-Sannyāsa-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/mw-wllv2bdY>

Yajña: Key For The Karmic Code

॥ श्री ॥

The 4th chapter of the Bhagavadgītā is the **Jñāna-Karma-Saṁnyāsa-Yoga - The Yoga of Knowledge and disciplines of Action and Knowledge.**

We begin this enlightening session on the auspicious occasion on the eve of Diwali with the traditional lamp lighting. May this light illuminate our life with knowledge as the Sun illuminates the darkest night. We offer our prayers to Yogeśvara and our Gurus, whose blessings have ensured that we have come in contact of the epitome of our Scriptures and the source of all knowledge, the Bhagavadgītā! It brings us vivaciousness, hope, light over ignorance and life itself.

A beautiful couplet from Dr. Warnekar described Deepavali to be the one that leads us from darkness to light; Light! That brings about vivaciousness, hope, fame, enthusiasm!

Ignorance often results from laziness, and the word '**tamas**' in Sanskrit captures all these shades of meaning - darkness, lethargy, ignorance, error, illusion, etc. Deepavali, in some sense, is victory over **tamas**. When celebrated with thoughtful happiness, it pleases the paranjyoti (supreme light), which is the source lamp of all knowledge and arts.

May this Deepavali would bring about all these qualities of light with it in our lives!

The chapter begins with Bhagavān mentioning to Arjuna about the origins of the knowledge HE was revealing to him. He declared the HE had declared this same Yoga to the Sun before, a long time ago. Afterwards the Sun imparted this Yoga to *Vaivasvata* Manu. Manu practised it himself and then taught it to *Ikshwaku*. Thus, this tradition has come down to us from ancient times.

Perplexed Arjuna asked how someone could who is almost his age could exist so many eons ago (Bhagavān Krishna was a contemporary to him); expressing the same that how was it possible that HE gave this knowledge to the Sun deity and the others so many years back in time.

Bhagavān then shares that neither was this HIS first birth nor Arjuna's. HE is being the upholder of Dharma had descended in this realm several times. This is when HE declared:

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥ 4.7॥

"Whenever there is a decline in righteousness and an increase in unrighteousness, O Arjuna, at that time I manifest Myself on earth."

As the Yajurveda reveals,

"यथा पिंडे तथा ब्रम्हांडे, यथा ब्रम्हांडे तथा पिंडे".

"As is the individual, so is the universe, as is the universe, so is the individual" or "As is the human body, so is the Cosmic Body, as is the cosmic body so is the human body"

Therefore, in order for Dharma to be established in this world, simply cleaning it from the outside won't do but what is needed is the cleansing of those who host the Divine essence.

Bhagavān stated that HIS birth and activities are divine and cannot get tainted by material imperfections that leads to an increase in Adharma. In the 10th chapter Parameśvara reveals that,

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।

नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥ 11॥

"Out of compassion for them, I, who dwell within their hearts, destroy the darkness born of ignorance, with the luminous lamp of knowledge."

Once a devotee knows this secret and engages in devotion with great faith, he attains HIM, who is the Cosmos and does not take birth in this world again.

For it is HE who cleanses us of our ignorance. Jñāneshvara ji states,

मी अविवेकाची काजळी । फेडूनी विवेकदीप उजळीं ।

तैं योगियां पाहे दिवाळी । निरंतर ॥ ५४ ॥

"Then I erase the soot of ignorance, brighten the lamp of discrimination and bring about an endless festival of lamps for the yogis." (The "I" here denotes Bhagavān).

Viveka, the ability of discernment is an essential quality when walking on the path of Dharma; for our life is filled with choices. The ability to discriminate an action to be the most 'appropriate' and in accordance with our duty is what one receives when HE bestows HIS grace on us. Just as HE became a guiding light for Arjuna!

How does one receive HIS Grace?

It comes through **Nirapeksha Anusandhā**, an exploration of HIM without expectations and **Nirapeksha Prem**, Love of HIM without expectations.

HE is the creator of the 4 classification of the society that are essential to run it smoothly. Any society needs people in Finance sector, Service sector, Knowledge sector and Defence sector to grow. The people engaged in these sectors when perform their duties in their best capacity the entire society benefits. Yet, HE is beyond this stratification...

Yet, any action has consequences. And the continued cycle of action and its effect is what leads to

one being unable to free themselves from this material world.

Bhagavān then elaborated on the science of Karma Yoga, explaining the 3 types of Karma,

- **Karma**: Actions with a normal sense of attachment. The common actions we perform is Karma.
- **Vikarma**: Those actions that lead to an increase in the attachment; so much so that a person can do anything to obtain his desire. This includes lying, cheating, and other evil actions. This is Vikarma.
- **Akarma**: When the activity is devoid of the sense of both Karta (doer) and Bhokta (enjoyer) that is Akarma.

Those that performed their actions with detachment and a sense of non doership perform inaction.

Then, what about the Paramātmā, is HE bound by the law of Karma?

Parameśvara transcends both the Guṇas and the law of Karma; as HE does actions like an **Akarta** (non-Doer); wherein HIS actions are without the sense of doer ship, neither is HE attached to them, HE is not directly involved in the Creation, for it is HIS Prakṛti that manifests and dissolves it. HE is immutable, non-changing and **Gunatita**; hence, unaffected by the Saṃsāra. Thus, HE is free from this cycle of Birth and death.

The Karma yogis, even while performing the most engaging task, are in the state of inaction and do not get entangled in the karmic reactions of such action. Knowing this: the ancient sages performed all their work as an act of sacrifice (yajña) for the pleasure of Paramātmā. They were not affected by happiness, distress, success, or failure. He explains that when Yajña is suitably dedicated, performed with proper knowledge and pure sentiments, then its remnants become like nectar.

Jñāneshvara in his beautiful stated,

रुणुझुणु रुणुझुणु रे भ्रमरा, सांडी तू अवगुणु रे भ्रमरा।

चरण कमलदळू रे भ्रमरा, भोगी तू निश्चळू रे भ्रमरा।।

Comparing our mind with a bumblebee, Jñāneshvara ji asks his mind to not be attached to sense-objects and instead have them situated within HIS lotus feet.

Those, devotees who in their Devotion seek HIM, HE becomes their shield. Thus, the causative desire to sustain and create action is no longer need; it gets eliminated from them and the actions happen as if they are self-sustained; for, HE sustains the momentum. This is *Akarma*, where the action is no longer dependent on a causative agent.

In a manner, it is similar to when an action becomes like a muscle memory like driving or swimming, where one no longer feels attachment to our movements as they are automatic. Gītā also transforms our mind-set in a similar manner.

The devotee neither has a sense of doership nor any desire for the fruits of action; all his actions are happening through HIM; he becomes a medium.

4.19

**yasya sarve samārambhāḥ(kh), kāmasaṅkalpavarjitāḥ,
jñānāgnidagdhakarmāṇaṃ(n), tamāhuḥ(ph) paṇḍitaṃ(m) budhāḥ. 4.19**

Even the wise call him a sage, whose undertakings are all free from desire and Sankalpa (thoughts of the world) and whose actions are burnt up by the fire of wisdom.

When we go beyond mere karmas; forsake the *Vikarmas* as our desires are forever engaged in HIM.

When the sense of doership gets relinquished with the knowledge that HE is the Doer; When there are no expectations towards the results of our action, then such actions are *Akarmas*. This is the highest state of a Yogi; For now, he has transcended the bondage of Karma.

What happens to those who do their actions as Akarma?

The Jñānis who understand the concept of Akarma and apply this knowledge, to continue to do their duties without a sense of doership or attachment to the result, destroy the consequences of their previous actions; just as the fire burns the matter to smithereens. This is the fire of Jñāna!

Those who perform pre-scribed duties and at the same time become free from fruitive desires, as well as from their **Vikarmas** (forbidden acts), burn up all the results of those duties in the fire of transcendental knowledge. This results from their performance of **niṣkāma-karma-yoga**. Such exalted Jīvās are called **jñānāgni-dagdha-karmā**, 'those who have burned all their karma in the fire of transcendental knowledge'.

This is how one attains freedom from the bondage of Karma through Jñāna-yoga. Such a Yogi is a "**pandit**".

4.20

tyaktvā karmaphalāsaṅgaṃ(n), nityatṛpto nirāśrayaḥ, karmaṇyabhipravṛtto'pi, naiva kiñcitkaroti saḥ. 4.20

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

Having described him, Yogeśvara now appreciated this, Yogi; Where the one who has renounced attachment to the fruits of his work, who is always satisfied by his own internal bliss, and who is not dependent on anyone for his maintenance; "*performs no action*," even though fully engaged in all types of action.

Nitya-tṛptaḥ, internally such a person remains blissfully content. **Nirāśrayaḥ**, 'not depending on anyone for one's maintenance.'

Thus, the 3 types of Yogīs have different approaches to reach him as they perform their actions.

The **Karma Yogi** does his actions as a duty without any expectations of result. Attitude: "**I don't want anything**"

The **Jñāna Yogi** performs his actions with the knowledge of discernment, where he understands that there is a difference between him and the actions; that the actions represent the material nature and hence, separate from him. Thus, the sense of doership is lost through Viveka. Thus, he becomes a witness to the actions of the body. Attitude: "**I am not the doer**"

The **Bhakti Yogi** surrenders both his actions and result to HIM. Whatever he does is for Paramātmā, HE is the one that doer and through surrendering the results of their actions to HIM; it is HE who takes care of whatever may be the consequences of these actions. Attitude, "**HE is the doer!**"

4.21

nirāśīryatacittātṁ, tyaktasarvaparigrahaḥ, śārīraṁ(ñ) kevalaṁ(ñ) karma, kurvannāpnoti kilbiṣam. 4.21

Having subdued his mind and body, and having given up all objects of enjoyment, free from craving, he who performs sheer bodily action, does not incur sin.

Nirāśīh, one who is without solicitation or expectations, one from whom asisah; **Asih** is a kind of desire that can be classed under prayer, solicitations, have departed; **chitta-ātmā**, who has the mind and organs under control; one by whom have been controlled (**yatau**) both the internal organ (**citta**) and the external aggregate of body and organs (**ātmā**); is **tyakta-sarva-parigrahaḥ**, (**parigrahaḥ**: receiving, accepting, possessions, belongings.) totally without possessions: one by whom have been renounced (**tyaktaḥ**) all (**sarvaḥ**) possessions (**parigrahaḥ**); **na apnoti**, he does not incur; **kilbisam**, demerit, in the form of evil as also righteousness-to one aspiring for Liberation, even righteousness is surely an evil because it brings bondage!

Thus, one develops an attitude where one's action is not dependent on another, "I keep working in spite of you" One doesn't need to leave everything to develop detachment. The feeling of being an instrument and a sense of non-doer ship is essential.

Kabir das ji stated,

जो कुछ किया सो तू किया मैं कुछ किया नाही,
कहो कही जो मैं किया, तुम ही हो मुझ माही।

When similar to Kabirdas ji one begins to attribute their actions to HIS inspiration, where one is in a state where there is a feeling merely being an instrument is when he is in realm of Bhakti!

This state goes to a level like Tukaram Maharaj ji, where he began to recognise that the Divine gift of cognitive speech is an instrument of expressing HIS melodies. It is rare in nature for it is predominantly only the humans who have the ability of sentient conversation.

आपुलिया बळे नाही मी बोलत । सखा कृपावंत वाचा त्याची ॥
साळुंकी मंजुळ बोलतसे वाणी । शिकविता धनी वेगळाची ॥

Thus, he states that it is not through my power that I am speaking but through HIS grace, the sweet words coming forth are indeed HIS grace!

The body is merely an instrument, and one is no longer bound by consequences of them, for he has now transcended the mundane intention for action and each action is an act of service to HIM, worship to HIM! Whatever may be the "action" their mind is situated within HIM.

He is like the bird whose most beatific singing is simply his daily routine. This is the highest state of Sādhanā, Gītā acts as a guide for us to navigate the tricky channels of life skillfully.

Vinoba Bhave ji called Gītā his mother, and he was her son, for a mother is the best teacher one could receive:

गीताई माऊली माझी ।
तिचा मी बाळ नेणता ।
पडता रडता घेई, उचलूनी कडेवरी ॥

One may recall the story of 2 students and the Guru who had taught them to avoid contact with females. As they went on travel, they saw a female drowning and one of them jumped to save her life. They came out and walked back towards their hermitage. There, they met their Guru. The other student disclosed the actions of his friend and worriedly asked what was to happen now?

“What are you worried about. Your friend left her back there, but you are still carrying her burden!”

Indeed, the attachment of mind towards any action determines its nature.

4.22

yadṛcchālābhasantuṣṭo, dvandvātīto vimatsaraḥ, śamaḥ(s) siddhāvasiddhau ca, kṛtvāpi na nibadhyate. 4.22

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

He takes more and more delight in supreme bliss by abandoning expectation and egoism. He remains content with whatever he gets by chance and does not say that this is mine and that is another's. Whatever he sees, he himself becomes that. Whatever he hears, he becomes one with it.

Yadṛichchhā-lābha-santuṣṭaḥ, remaining satisfied with what comes unasked for **yadṛichchhā-lābha** means coming to possess something without having prayed for it; feeling contented with that.

Dvandva- atītaḥ, having transcended the dualities-one is said to be beyond dualities when his mind is not distressed even when afflicted by such opposites as heat and cold, etc.

Vimatsaraḥ, being free from spite, from the idea of enmity; and **samaḥ**, equipoised; **siddhau ca asiddhau**, is success and failure, with regard to things that come unasked for.

The Yogi who is equipoised, not delighted or sorrowful in getting or not getting food for the sustenance of the body; who sees inaction in action, who is ever poised in the realization of the Self as it is; he understands “I am not the doer of anything”; the organs act on the objects of the organs he, realizing the absence of agent ship in the Self, certainly does not do any actions like a Saṃnyāsi.

Joy, sorrow, positive negative all become similar to him, and he achieves a state of “**samattva**”. This equanimity is seen in nature as well as it resides in harmony. The “**sa**” of the *sargam* tunes as a base point which harmonises everything in a melody. This is “**samattva**”

However, from the standpoint of his own realization which has arisen from the valid means of knowledge presented in the scriptures, he is surely not an agent. HE, to whom is thus ascribed agent ship by others, **na nibadhyate**, is not bound; **api**, even; **kṛtvā**, by performing such actions as moving about for alms merely for the maintenance of the body, because action which is a source of bondage has been burnt away along with its cause by the fire of wisdom.

The biographies and lores of saints teach us how to reach the pinnacle of their spiritual practice.

The incident from Tukaram Maharaj's inspirational life is an example.

As a habit, Tukaram mauli would do his practice and sing *bhajans* in devotion of *Vitthala* mauli on a mountain peak. Initially, the birds on the peak would fly away in fright on seeing him; this would greatly pain him as birds are sensitive. An equipoised person exuding love would not get such a reaction. However, as his *Sādhanā* progressed further, there came a point where the birds no longer displayed fear.

This displayed that dedication in *Sādhanā* would eventually lead to internal purification as one came nearer to his *Ātman* which is the reflection of *Paramātmā* and would bring about noticeable changes in a person. These could act as reference points for others to indicate their stage on the spiritual ladder.

When a person who has already started action becomes endowed with the realisation of the identity of the Self with the actionless Brahman, then it follows that in the case of that man, who has experienced the absence of doership, actions and purposes in the Self, their actions become relinquished. But if this becomes impossible for some reason and he continues to be engaged in those actions as before, still they certainly do not do anything. This absence of action has been shown in the verse, having given up attachment to the results of action.

He becomes a witness then. He remains content with whatever he gets by chance and does not say that this is mine and that which is another's. Whatever he sees, he himself becomes that. Whatever he hears, he becomes one with it. When he walks, speaks or acts, he becomes all that. As the Sun rises, he becomes it. He notices the synchronisation between his breath, wind and heart beats and the rhythm of earth. When he sees nothing but his own Self in the world, no action can hold him in bondage.

Jñāneshvara Maharaj states:

हा मत्सरु जेथ उपजे । तेतुले नुरेचि जया दुजे ।
तो निर्मत्सरु काइ म्हणजे । बोलवरी ॥ १२३ ॥

When he sees no distinction between ME and HIM, which gives rise to envy, how can we call him envious?

Thus, he has achieved freedom from action even while performing actions and is beyond the qualities; even though he is endowed with them, he becomes liberated!

4.23

gataśṅgasya muktasya, jñānāvasthitacetasaḥ, yajñāyācarataḥ(kh) karma, śamagraṃ(m) praviliyate. 4.23

All his actions get dissolved entirely, who is free from attachment and has no identification with the body and free from the feeling of mine, whose mind is established in the knowledge of Self and who works merely for the sake of sacrifice.

Karma (actions) performed for the pleasure of Śrī Bhagavān never become a cause of bondage to the material world. Such action for the pleasure of Bhagavān is described here as **akarma-bhāva**, the state of inaction.

No one remains free of action. Bhagavān performs action as well. As stated in the 3rd chapter,
न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किञ्चन ।
नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥22॥

“There is no duty for Me to do in all the three worlds, O Parth, nor do I have anything to gain or attain. Yet, I am engaged in prescribed duties.”

HE also declared in the 5th chapter that those that are situated within HIM dedicating their actions to HIM remain unconstrained by its consequences.

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।

लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥ 10॥

“Those who dedicate their actions to Parameśvara abandoning all attachment, remain untouched by demerit, just as a lotus leaf is untouched by water.”

The one who is a Jñāni is **gata-saṅgasya**, free from material attachments:

Such a person is **Muktasya**, having freedom from desires and hatreds.

Sādhanā is not limited to ritual worship, but those who undertake vocations with same tendency where work becomes worship, their mind is **Jnanavastita chetasaha**: mind established in knowledge. Be it dancing, cricketers and others. Knowledge and learning are not limited to a specific age, we have aged individuals in western countries who go back to college and undertake scholarly work.

The actions one undertakes should be **Yajnaaya**, conduct of work in the spirit of sacrifice. Lokmanya Tilak ji during his prison days completed the complex critique on Bhagavad Gītā, the **Gītā Rahasya** based on Karma Yoga

The creation itself is a part of yajña. The 3rd chapter gives detail on this,

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।

अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥ 10॥

“In the beginning of creation, Brahmā created humankind along with duties, and said, “Prosper in the performance of these yajñas (sacrifices), for they shall bestow upon you all you wish to achieve.”

The material world is interdependent, and it functions properly due to actions taken for self and others.

- **Vyaṣṭi**: Actions performed for self.
- **Samaṣṭi**: Actions performed for the community.
- **Srushti**: Actions performed for the creation itself.
- **Parameshti**: Actions performed in service of HIM.

Societal Actions that maintain a balance of these 4 are necessary in maintaining the smooth functioning of the material world.

Jñāneshvara ji stated that every-one should perform his duty as a Yajña and offer his or her actions as flowers at the feet of HIM. This is the Yajña of Svadharma!

स्वधर्मु जो बापा । तोचि नित्ययज्ञु जाण पां ।

म्हणोनि वर्ततां तेथ पापा । संचारु नाहीं ॥ ८१ ॥

हा निजधर्मु जें सांडे । कुकर्मी रति घडे ।

तैचि बंधु पडे । संसारिकु ॥ ८२ ॥

म्हणोनि स्वधर्मानुष्ठान । ते अखंड यज्ञयाजन ।

जो करी तया बंधन । कहींच नाहीं ॥ ८३ ॥

“My boy, know that one’s duty itself is an obligatory sacrifice. If one performs his duty, demerits do not affect him. When a person abandons his duty and takes delight in prohibited deeds, he becomes entangled in worldly bondage. Therefore, know that the discharge of one’s duty is a continuous sacrificial session. Whoever performs his duty as a sacrifice does not suffer bondage.”

He becomes that which he thinks about is common theme mentioned throughout Gītā. One may recall the story of the beetle who created another one due to his thinking. Similarly, thinking and taking guidance from the lives of these saints whose tapa (literally meaning heating) where the austerities are so tremendous that literally increase the body temperature due to agitation. It is said that that agni that is created then burns through everything including even the past actions of the yogi. Thus, learning from their actions is of tremendous use. One need not copy, but they could gain a glimpse of the stakes present and incorporate those that are work on our qualities and experience.

4.24

brahmārpaṇam(m) brahma haviḥ(r), brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam, brahmaiva tena gantavyam(m), brahma karma samādhinā. 4.24

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

The vision of a Jñāni is what distinguishes him from an ordinary individual. A change in outlook can transform the world! The world was created as if from a Yajña (fire sacrifice) of Brahman. Material actions are compulsory for the living entity who is bound to material consciousness. In such mundane activities, the faithful discharge of prescribed duties in which one can deliberate on spiritual reality, or **cit-tattva**, is called yajña.

What is this Brahman?

When conscious reality manifests in matter, it is called Brahman.

Yajña is perfect when its five constituents, namely **arpaṇam** (the instrument for offering), **havi** (the ingredients), **agni** (the fire), **hotā** (the doer) and **phala** (the fruit), are the resting place of brahman, that is, when they are meant for the revelation of brahman. A person’s activity is known as **brahma-yajña** when he seeks revelation of brahman in his actions with concentrated meditation. The instruments of offering, the ingredients, the fire, the doer (that is, his very own existence) and the fruits are all brahman. Thus, their ultimate destination is also brahman.

The ingredients offered to the Devatās in the sacrifice are called **havi**. When the oblations are in the form of duty, he becomes free of their bondage. For him there is no distinction between the oblation, the Yajña and the enjoyer of the Yajña. When they perform it, the oblation and the mantras are imperishable and of the nature of Brahman. Thus, when he comes to realise that the action itself is Brahman, then the action performed by him becomes **Akarma** (nonaction). Leading a life of non-discrimination, and espousing dispassion, he performs the **Yoga Yajña**.

Yajña is taken as an illustration because at the end of Dvaparayuga, sacrifices were performed elaborately by all people, and they were familiar with the rites and rituals. The principle is applicable to everything and every action that man does. By concentration and meditation, by constant absorption in Brahman, every kind of work that is done melts into Brahman. Work then loses its

separate limited quality, its binding power. It acquires a divine and spiritual quality. The distinction between karma and jñāna is thus eliminated, and Brahman alone is realised in all that one thinks and does.

It is similar to how for a surgery, the surgeon, the operation, the tools and the patient all are described as essential in performing it. The tools are worthy of worship as they allow us to perform action. How does one's outlook change the view though?

Just as all aspects of an electricity department require smooth functioning yet, the basic elements to run it like the machinery, the coal and other raw materials are all part of nature, one traces it back to the Brahman. Similarly, be it food, clothing or shelter nothing is free of Brahman because creation itself is it. We too are a part of this creation.

Namdeva ji elucidated this beautifully,

देव खाते देव पीते। देवावरी में निजते।।

देव देते देव घेते। देवासवें व्यवहारिते।।

देव येथें देव तेथे। देवाविणें नाहीं रीते।।

जनीं म्हणे विठाबाई। भरुनि अंतरबाहीं।।

"Dev is the one that eats, I sleep on HIM, Dev takes and gives, our transactions are with HIM, HE is here and there, nothing exists beyond HIM, I say this filled with HIM, my Vitthu mauli!"

(P.S. Dev is also an abbreviation of his own name, therefore, here "I" and "HE" become synonymous)

4.25

daivamevāpare yajñam(m), yoginaḥ(ph) paryupāsate, brahmāgnāvapare yajñam(m), yajñenaivopajuhvati. 4.25

Other Yogīs duly offer sacrifice only in the form of worship to gods, while others perform sacrifice by offering the self by the Self itself in the fire of Brahma.

There are various types of yajña according to the various desired goals. Yajña be it into literal form or allegorical needs a team to perform it. **TEAM** by its very definition inspires us to achieve more (TEAM-together everyone achieves more).

Yoginaḥ alludes to the karma-yogīs, or Bhakti Yogis while **apare** implies jñāna-yogīs. **Brahmāgnau** means that brahman, or Paramātmā Himself, is the sacrificial fire. In that sacrificial fire, or the Absolute Truth (**tat-padārtha**), the oblation of the jīva (**tvam-padārtha**) is offered by the means (ladle) of chanting the **praṇava-mantra, Om**.

Here, the words **yajñam** and **yajñena** have been used for the object offered (such as ghee) and the instrument of the offering (the ladle) respectively. In other words, it is understood that the pure jīva and praṇava are indicated by a superior understanding of yajña and yajñena, respectively.

One may be on any path but the successful crossing the path itself requires multiple efforts from many people. Guruji states that there is no one who is self-made, our success and life have many contributors. The caregiver who looked after us when we were sick, the teacher, friends, mentors all have contributed towards shaping us to who we are at present. Society too works similarly at a macro scale. Thus, our vision cannot and should not be towards narrow interests but should look towards the larger good of the world.

The **Pasāyadān** by Jñāneshvara ji is perhaps one of the most beautiful compositions that is a gift for all of humanity. There he states,

आतां विश्वात्मके देवे, येणे वाग्यज्ञे तोषावे,
तोषोनि मज द्यावे, पसायदान हे ॥१॥

“Now, I pray to the Parameśvara, who is the Ātman of this universe, that he will be pleased with my writings, scribblings and happily grant me this *Prasad* (see above for explanation) gift which I can contain in my palms.”

One receives *Prasada* of the offerings they have made to Bhagavān. Here, Sant Jñāneshvara mauli, prayed to the Parameśvara, his guru Nivruttinath to grant him the Pasāyadān or *Prasad* of what he asked in these verses.

किंबहुना तुमचें केलें । धर्मकीर्तन हें सिद्धी नेलें ।
येथ माझे जी उरलें । पाईकपण ॥ १७९३ ॥

“The work, which you saints have enabled me to compose, for the benefit of the three worlds, is peerless. It is due to your grace, that this sermon with music and singing (kirtana) has come to an end. All that remains to be done, is to render service to you.”

Imagine the magnanimity of the child who had been abused by the society for being the child of a Saṃnyāsi yet, asking for their wellbeing. Such is the nature of Yogi, whose thoughts, actions, words, and vision all done as if a Yajña for HIM. Indeed, such purity can only come when the offerings are burnt in sacrificial fire!

4.26

śrotrādīnīndriyāṅyanye, saṃyamāgniṣu juhvati, śabdādīnviṣayānanya, indriyāgniṣu juhvati. 4.26

Others offer as sacrifice their senses of hearing etc., into the fires of self-discipline. Other Yogis, again, offer sound and other objects of perception into the fires of the senses.

Our experience of the material world depends on our senses and sense objects. The mind becomes the one to interpret them hence, prone to fluctuations due to constant stimulation. In order to attain self realisation one has turned the gaze inwards, where the mind needs to become silent and in control. For this to happen one needs to control their senses and reject the sense objects.

When one realises the worthlessness and shadowy nature of these sense objects, the senses do not run after them. They remain steadfast. The rushing out of the senses towards material objects disturbs the mind and throws it in turmoil. When the senses are kept in their place, the mind is calm and when the mind is calm, the bliss of Ātman is experienced. This is sacrificing the sense-objects in the fire of the senses.

Knowledge is that fire that allows one to attain wisdom to do that. Hence, it is called Yajña where one gains the ability to discern between **neer-ksheer**.

In Sanskrit, the famous term '**neer-ksheer-vivek**', meaning 'prudence to distinguish milk from the mixture of milk and water' is mainly associated with a bird '**Paramhansa**' or '**Rajhans**', meaning 'a celestial/royal swan'). It is believed that if a mixture of milk and water is kept in front of a Rajhans, it will drink only milk from the mixture and leave water behind.

Restraint is the key to Brahma jñāna!

Saints like Tembe Swami Maharaj, Vasudevanada Saraswati were so advanced in their Sādhanā that they would refuse the touch of others. Devotees thronged to them so that they could take their blessings. Once when Tembe swami maharaj ji was incessantly requested to grant them their wish of touching his feet, guruji asked them to bring millets and place them near his feet. As they did the millets popped due to heat. Such was the energy of tapah!

Tukaram mauli stated,

तुका म्हणे आम्ही झालो अग्नी रूप, लागो नाही अंगा पाप पुण्या ॥३॥

He declared that one transforms themselves into fire, the concept of negative and positive consequences for actions do not arise!

Those who took up Saṃnyāsa like a very rigid life. The food that they receive in the form of bhiksha is divided into 4 parts were,

- The 1st part is offered to the temple.
- The 2nd part is offered to the cow.
- The 3rd part is offered to birds.
- The 4th part is washed in water, so any taste is removed and then used for consumption.

Those with such a strict regimen and austere lifestyle along with their devotion towards the Parameśvara are HIS reflections and thus, revered.

When the mind and senses are in control, when there is '**samattva**', equanimity established within them, an individual develops **Viveka**, the ability of discernment between what to do and not like the Rajhans is able to in the case of **Neer-Ksheer**

4.27

sarvāṇīndriyakarmāṇi, prāṇakarmāṇi cāpare, ātmasaṃyamayogāgnau, juhvati jñānadīpīte. 4.27

Others sacrifice all the functions of their senses and the functions of the vital airs (Prāṇa) into the fire of Yoga in the shape of self-control, kindled by wisdom.

Apare is the 'the knower of pure self, the jīva'. The yogīs offer all of their senses, the activities of the senses such as hearing and seeing, the ten types of life-airs (**prāṇa**), and the actions of the life-airs into the fire of the controlled self, or the fire of the jīva's purified existence. In other words, they completely dissolve the mind, the intelligence, the senses and the ten life-airs in the pure self. The seeker gradually practices sense-restraint and breath-regulation (**Prāṇayama**). The fire of self-control is fanned into flame by knowledge.

One can notice that a laser sharp focus on our goal creates an environment where actions and individuals are merely a means to achieve the end goal. In such cases, be it independence or in service to nation creates a state where actions take the form of oblations in fire for a larger good.

One is reminded of a couplet from the work of Swatrantra Veer Sawarkar "**Majhe Mrutyupatra**" (my last will) where he states,

हे मातृभूमि तुजला मन वाहियेले
वक्तृत्व वाक्-विभव ही तुज अर्पियेले
तुंतेची अर्पिली नवी कविता वधूला
लेखां प्रति विषय तूची अनन्य झाला ॥ १६ ॥

Oh Motherland! I have dedicated my intellect to you,
To you I have dedicated my oratory,
To you I have dedicated my new poem,
You have become the sole subject of my prose ॥ 16 ॥

(The ten types of life-airs and their actions are as follows: **prāṇa**: breathing out, **apāna**: breathing in, **samāna**: adjusting the equilibrium of all objects eaten or drunk, **udāna**: going upwards, **vyāna**: moving everywhere, **nāga**: belching, **kūrma**: opening the eyes, **kṛkara**: coughing, **devadatta**: yawning, **dhanañjaya**: remaining in the body even after death.)

4.28

dravyayajñāstapoyajñā, yogayajñāstathāpare, svādhyāyajñānayajñāśca, yatayaḥ(s) saṁśītavratāḥ. 4.28

Some perform sacrifice with material possessions; some offer sacrifice in the shape of austerities; others sacrifice through the practice of Yoga; while some striving souls, observing austere vows, perform sacrifice in the shape of wisdom through the study of sacred texts.

Those who cannot constantly be engaged thus, could engage in smaller yajñas like those below. There are various other types of Yajñas,

- **dravya-yajñāḥ**: Those who perform sacrifice by offering their material possessions in charity.
- **tapo-yajñāḥ**: Those who perform sacrifice by performing difficult austerities, such as the cāndrāyaṇa-vrata.
- **yoga-yajñāḥ**: Those who perform sacrifice by the eightfold process of aṣṭāṅga-yoga.
- **svādhyāya-jñāna-yajñāḥ**: Those whose sacrifice is to study the Vedas only in order to acquire knowledge. This also includes *japa yajña* as mentioned in the 10th chapter.

यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि स्थावराणां हिमालयः ॥25॥

"All these are tools for one to generate control over their mind and senses through habit and practice. The self-study is for the expansion of our mind, to broaden our vision and personal growth."

Adhyayan, or Indepth study could also be of various types,

- **Vachak**: study for general awareness, for literature, current affairs etc
- **Svādhyāya**: study for increase of knowledge, and personal growth.
- **Adhyayan** for their sustenance

One chooses the practice and tools per their need. Just as one only takes the medicine that is needed from the chemist. Similarly, one practices that Sādhanā that is their requirement.

4.29, 4.30

**apāne juhvati prāṇam(m), prāṇe'pānam(n) tathāpare,
prāṇāpānagatī ruddhvā, prāṇāyāmaparāyaṇāḥ. 4.29
apare niyatāhārāḥ(ph), prāṇānprāṇeṣu juhvati,
sarve'pyete yajñavido, yajñakṣapitakalmaṣāḥ. 4.30**

Other Yogīs offer the act of exhalation into that of inhalation; even so, others the act of inhalation into that of exhalation. There are still others given to the practice of Prāṇāyāma (breath- control), who, having regulated their diet and controlled the processes of exhalation and inhalation both, pour their vital airs into the vital airs themselves. All these have their sins consumed away by sacrifice and understand the meaning of sacrificial worship.

This verse describes them who use even their breath as an oblation to Yajña.

The word **prāṇāyāma** has two components. **Prāṇa** is 'a special type of air' and **āyāma** is 'expansion'. Here, expansion means to control the prāṇa (life-air) from the tip of the toenails to the hair on top of the head.

Some yogīs, who are devoted to the control of their life-airs, sacrifice the up-going breath (**prāṇa**) into the down-going breath (**apāna**). This means that at the time of inhalation they combine them. Similarly, at the time of exhalation, they offer the down-going breath into the out-going breath, and as they hold their breath, they stop the movement of both the up-going breath and down-going breath and become fixed in the practice of prāṇāyāma.

Others, who want to control the senses, sacrifice their senses into their life-airs by moderating their food intake. The senses are under the control of prāṇa, the life-air. When the life-air becomes weak, naturally the senses also become weak and unable to enjoy their sense objects. In this way, these persons offer their disabled senses into their life-air, living only on their life-air.

Their control over their senses is achieved by strict restraint over food, sensory experience and controlling what when and how they experience something.

All who know the principles of yajña and who perform them as described above gradually advance in knowledge, by which they can attain brahman. Here, the secondary result of such yajña is explained; where they also taste the nectarean remnants of yajña, such as mundane enjoyment, opulence and mystic perfections. Similarly, the primary fruit is described as **brahma-yānti** (the attainment of brahman).

Those who are desirous of mukti perform yajña, to wash off by that means all their mental impurities. When their ignorance is destroyed, their essential nature alone remains, and then they do not have the notion of distinction between the fire and the sacrifice. Then the desires of the sacrifice come to an end, and thereafter all actions cease. Then that (wisdom) which is not penetrated by thought and reason is not defiled by the blemish of duality.

4.31

**yajñāśiṣṭāmṛtabhujo, yānti brahma sanātanam,
nāyaṃ(m) loko'styayajñasya, kuto'nyaḥ(kh) kurusattama. 4.31**

Arjuna, Yogīs who enjoy the nectar that has been left over after the performance of a sacrifice attain

the eternal Brahma. To the man who does not offer sacrifice, even this world is not happy; how, then, can the other world be happy?

Bhagavān now explained the great merit of yajña. The remnants of food offered as oblations are equal to ambrosia, and by tasting it one reaches HIM. So the seeker should perform some form of yajña, some devotional act, some righteous deed, some oblation to the Divine, and then only should he take his food. Such food pure blissfulness. One who gives.... receives contentment!

But what of those who don't?

In the 3rd chapter Bhagavān called them thieves.

इष्टान्भोगान्नि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।

तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥ 12॥

"The Devatās, being satisfied by the performance of sacrifice, will grant you all the desired necessities of life. But those who enjoy what is given to them, without making offerings in return, are verily thieves."

Those satiated with the elixir of the remains of sacrifice become immortal and attain the state of Brahman. Dispassion does not espouse those who do not perform yajña and do not worship the fire of self-control from birth.

On this note we conclude this session.

Let us now take a look at some of the Q and A's

Sapna ji

Question: How to ask for forgiveness if one forgets HIM while performing our actions?

Answer: Forgiveness is an excellent exercise that only benefits us. To err is human. And who can be free of debts like those of our mother? True remorse is what leads us to HIS grace and propels us forward.



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You have enjoyed this vivechan writeup! In spite of intense editing and proofreading, errors of grammar, as also of omission and commission may have crept in. We appreciate your forbearance.

Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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