

ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

Chapter 4: Jñāna-Karma-Sannyāsa-Yoga

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/oREAEXHnzeU>

Different kinds of Yajñas: lead to the same Goal of Liberation

The 4th Chapter of the Bhagavadgītā is "*Jnana Karma SamnyāsaYoga*" - the 'Yoga of knowledge and the disciplines of action'.

In this chapter, Krishna glorifies Karma Yoga and imparts the Transcendental Knowledge (the knowledge of the Soul and the Ultimate Truth) to Arjuna. The third session on said chapter began with the Auspicious Lighting of the traditional lamp that lights the steadfast flame, guiding us towards the path of Dharma, cleansing our Antaḥkaraṇa with the light of knowledge shedding the path of Ignorance, followed by invoking Śrī Krishna with below prayer, and salutations to Pūjya Swami ji.

***Vasudeva Sutam Devam Kamsa Chanura Mardanam
Devakeeparamaanandan Krishnam Vande Jagadgurum***

Son of Vasudev, Divine Bhagavān, killer of Kamsa and Chaanura, the cause of supreme happiness of Mother Devaki, we bow to Śrī Krishna, the Guru (teacher) of the Universe.

The previous session ended at the 20th shloka, where Bhagavān said:

***tyaktvā karma-phalāsaṅgaṁ nitya-tripto nirāśhrayaḥ
karmaṇyabhīpravṛitto 'pi naiva kiñchit karoti saḥ ||4.20||***

Leaving / relinquishing / abandoning all attachments to the result of his activities (Karma Phala) and one who is always satisfied and independent in himself. He does not perform any sakam karma (with personal gain or self interest in mind), although he is engaged in all sorts of actions.

Bhagavān continues highlighting the benefits of being a Karma yogi.

nirāśīryatacittātmā, tyaktasarvaparigrahaḥ, śārīraṃ(ñ) kevalaṃ(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.

One who can control his body and is devoid of any desires and expectations and balanced in his approach to life will perform all requisite actions without giving up possessions and ownership. Such a person will believe in being a **kartṛtva** (performer) and not **Bhokṛtva** (enjoyer).

Bhagavān says it is easier to control the body than the mind. We have Five Faculties, each of Action (**Karmendriya**) and Perception (**Jnanendriya**).

Karmendriya:

- **vak-tattva**: speech (voice)
- **pani-tattva**: grasping (hands)
- **pada-tattva**: walking (feet)
- **payu-tattva**: excretion (anus)
- **upastha-tattva**: procreation (genitals)

Jnanendriya:

- **srotra-tattva**: hearing (ears)
- **tvak-tattva**: touching (skin)
- **chakshu-tattva**: seeing (eyes)
- **rasana-tattva**: tasting (tongue)
- **ghrana-tattva**: smelling (nose)

The 5 senses or perceptions are ruled by the mind. The mind is governed by **Prāṇa**, the vital life force or energy which governs the mind that in turn governs the senses. To control or reign in the senses we have to restrain and steady our mind first. Regulating the **Prāṇa** is the prerequisite for regulating the body.

Functioning of Prāṇa and the method to control it:

Our body is an important tool in our journey towards spiritual evolution. A sick body that is out of control and remains untrained cannot have an influence over our mind. Practicing Yoga is the key to tune our body.

One needs to tune his body to perfection for bringing about balance and energizing it through the regular practice of Yoga asanas. Presently if a person has no control of his body and remains sick then getting trained in yoga and learning to control the body into a state of well being is a perfect initiation. Once the yoga āsanās enable the person to gain control, one achieves the expertise to control any part of the body. Accomplished body control has enabled many Yogis practicing austerities controlling their breath for weeks or months together. This followed by Prāṇāyāma reins the mind, in turn controlling the senses.

The second part of the shloka teaches about relinquishing the ownership of possessions - **tyaktasarvaparigrahaḥ**. It does not mean giving up all material possessions. It means to avoid accumulating material possessions unnecessarily beyond one's needs. Bhagavān says not to run away from responsibilities but perform karma for sustenance and not to be greedy.

yadṛcchālābhasantuṣṭo, dvandvātīto vimatsaraḥ, ṣamaḥ(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.

Bhagavān teaches to be content with whatever one receives through his efforts, remain satiated without harbouring any dualities in one's mind bereft of malice, jealousy and desires remain equipoised both in success as well in failure.

One will remain free from the bonds of karmas when one remains balanced in favourable or unfavourable situations. One needs to remain satisfied with what one has through effortless karma, refrain from nurturing desires, and remain unaffected by the outcome of actions. Becoming despondent in defeat and pompous in success has to be avoided at all times.

Close observation will reveal that we are filled with pride at miniscule achievements, and are engulfed in despair at small failures. These days one floods the social media with bragging messages over trivial successes. Alternatively, in moments of failure, one feel ashamed and hides at the slightest defeat. Bhagavān advices to do appropriate righteous deeds but with a non-doer attitude. When one is a non doer, one will remain insulated from the consequences. A person with no-doer attitude would be look at something that happens as an observer externally without letting it affect him. Bhagavān says that '**I am nothing and nothing belongs to me' should be the rightful attitude**. Such a person lives in the present moment without terming anything as good or bad. One should not live in past which is over and done with, nor be anxious of the future which we are practically clueless about. **It is important to live in the moment.**

4.23

gatasaṅgasya muktasya, jñānāvasthitacetasaḥ, yajñāyācarataḥ(kh) karma, ṣamagraṃ(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.

Śrī Krishna beautifully describes attributes of a self-realized man here: One who is devoid of worldly attachments. Is established in the knowledge, and Performs all actions as if he is performing a yajna **What does Yajna mean?**

Here yajna is not referred as ritualistic oblation that we do inside agni or in a hawan kunda. The term has been used as a metaphor wherein all actions are offered, dedicated to the divine just as offerings. Whatever one thinks or does, should be done for the Divine, by the Divine and for the Divine. This kind of attitude is called as yajna in Bhagavad Gītā. Yajnas are:

- virtuous actions
- actions of merit
- acts dedicated to Paramātmā

Even the smallest of activity like sweeping the floor can become a yajna, if the same is performed joyously and is dedicated to the Divine. Likewise, even activities like cooking,

walking, talking etc. can become a yajna provided we do it with choice and offer it to the Divine. There is a change in attitude when one performs religious activities vs worldly activities. Whatever task one does, be it physical, emotional, mental or intellectual, if one does it without attachment and having dedicated to the Paramātmā then every such activity becomes a Yajna. In general, people do not enjoy their work. The lady of the house cooks in irritation, and sometimes also serves in anger. Instead, the attitude of the cook (be it man or a woman) should be such that food is being cooked for Bhagavān and while serving one should not look at whether the person being served is related or not, whether the person is liked or disliked. Rather the cook should look at the Divine reflected in the said person's face and thus serve lovingly. Then the cooking and the act of serving becomes a yajna. To conclude, Bhagavān has said in this shloka that one who performs a yajna does not get bound by his karmas / activities.

In next few shlokas Bhagavān explains 12 types of Yajnas. Even if one is able to follow one of them, that would mean complete transformation of that person.

4.24

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

Brahman is the oblation; Brahman is the melted butter (ghee); by Brahman is the oblation poured into the fire of Brahman; Brahman verily shall be reached by him who always sees Brahman in action.

In the following few verses, Bhagavān sheds light on the 12 types of yājyās. One would evolve into a better person if one tries to follow even a single one of the yājyās mentioned by HIM.

Brahmā-yajña: This spiritual practice involves offering of oneself into the fire of the supreme Truth (**brāhman**). It is to meditate on the Supreme Truth as being One with the Pure Self. Such practice of meditation (**Brahmā-abhyāsa**) leads one to the Realisation '**I am the Supreme Infinite Truth.**'

This verse is well known as it is chanted by the sanyasis and householders before partaking food as a ritual. The resultant energy coming out of the offering is also Brāhma and the one who performs this type of yajña identifies himself as Brāhma.

Bhagavān has elaborated the ritualistic meaning of the word yajña for our benefit. HE said that in Brāhma yājñā,

- The **food offered as oblation** to the sacrificial fire is Brāhma
- The **person making the oblation** is the Brāhma
- The **ladle that is used to offer the material like ghee, and other cooked food etc. as 'ārpaṇam'** is Brāhma.
- **Whatever is attained after** the yajña is Brāhma
- The **one who chants is** Brāhma and
- The **fruits of the yajña** is Brāhma

One who sees Brāhma everywhere in every form will always remains in a state of Samādhi, the higher state of consciousness. He no more needs to sit in Samādhi at a fixed place and time. He is forever in such a higher state whether performing actions or not; for he is following the prescribed actions defined by the Divine as the Supreme Brāhma yajña.

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.

Some yogis engage in worshipping by offering different sacrifices to the Demigods, while Jnanis offer knowledge as sacrifice by the Brahmā in the fire of Brahmā. So, Śrī Krishna said that

- There are some yogis who worship Deities or Demigods by offering their sacrificial oblation like ghee, incense sticks etc. to that fire and chanting the mantras.
- But other yogis do not engage in this kind of ritualistic concept of yajna. Their yajna is different in the sense that for them being in steady remembrance of Brahmā is yajna. Which means that they always remain absorbed in Brahmā.

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.

Indriya-yajña: In this type of yajña some offer various senses of Hearing, smelling, touching, tasting into the Fires of Self-Discipline. Some of the Yogis offer objects of perception like sound smell, touch etc. into the Fires of Senses. Here one has to understand that its not physical offering but the yajña to Control one's Sense intake. It means to take in only that which is conducive (sattvika) in nature and as an act of worship.

The third type of yajña is by using the 5 gnanendriya and 5 karmendriya. Bhagavān says, there are some who offer their senses in the sacrifice to the Agni for self control. Some others use the sense objects or the eyes, nose, ears and sacrifice in the fire of senses, which is experiencing the sensory world without any attachment.

Such persons will continue to see through their eyes but do not absorb what they see. Seeing the external things without absorbing or responding is the sacrifice of the sense objects. On attaining the Self-realisation every action of the person would become a yajña. Some yogis attain control and restraint over the senses and prevent them from interacting with the sense objects.

Other yogis offer the sense objects as sacrifice in the fire of senses which also is another form of yajña. Ears listening to sound is an effect of the sacrificial yajña by offering the sound in the ears. Likewise eyes seeing colour and forms in effect is the yajña of fire, eating, walking is also yajña. One hand yogis perform yajña by self control and preventing interaction with sense objects and on the other by experiencing through the sense organs.

Sense and sense objects meet at some point but some people do not stop at that and it results in reaction by offering the sense object. Both these practices are restraining the mind allowing the senses to interact with sensory objects is a yajña. Being without any attachment validates it which also comes in the category of yajña.

What one does is not important but how it is done and with what attitude it is performed decides on

the type of yajña being practiced. One should be renunciated and devoid of ego. Such renunciation becomes a yajña. When one witnesses as a non doer by experiencing the interaction but with detachment is also a yajña.

Living in this world one can also do yajña by performing all duties but without any expectation while interacting with the material world.

One who opts to withdraw his senses from sense objects like a tortoise withdrawing into a shell, is also performing a yajña.

4.27

**sarvāṅdriyakarmāṇi, prāṇakarmāṇi cāpare,
ātmasaṃyamamayogāgnau, 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.

Samyama-yajña: This is to offer all the sense organs of perception and action along with the physiological functions (**prāṇa-karma**) into the fire of self control.

Bhagavan says in this yajña, some offer the activities of all sense organs and interactions of Prāṇa as an oblation into the knowledge illuminated fire of yoga which is established in the Supreme Divinity. There are yogis who establish the senses in the mind and the mind in the Prāṇa (the life energy). This is also a sort of yagya. Some yogis offer all the actions of their senses, their life energy in the fire of self restraint which is ignited and created by the spiritual wisdom. The saṃyama does not come to ordinary people but only to those who have the spiritual wisdom.

4.28

**dravyayajñāstapoyajñā, yogayajñāstathāpare,
svādhyāyajñānayajñāśca, yatayaḥ(s) saṃśitavratāḥ. 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.

dravyayajñā- Sacrifice of possessions (material), money cloth food, charity we do but earned through legitimate means.

tapoyajñā- Tapah does not mean doing penance on one leg. It means performing yajñā with full devotion in carrying any task with set rules and in day to day behaviour .

While performing prescribed duties we may come across favourable or unfavourable situations. Handling all these and continuing with prescribed duties towards families, friends etc. itself is a penance.

yogayajñā- Many types of yogas like ashtanga yoga, hatha yoga etc. are practiced in this type of yajñā.

Ashtanga yoga is the eight-fold steps of:

- **yama:** practicing values like non-injury,
- **niyama:** taking vows like purity of body and mind,
- **āsana:** practice of postures
- **prāṇāyāma:** breath control exercise
- **pratyāhāra:** withdrawal of senses
- **dhāraṇā:** practicing concentration
- **dhyāna:** practice of meditation, and
- **samādhi:** practicing total absorption of the mind.

Remaining equipoised in all situations whether respected or disrespected, whether in profit or in loss, is yoga.

svādhyāyajñā- The spiritual practice of reading of the scriptures or repetition of a mantra (japa) or study of the scripture (svādhyāya) or introspection

Jñāna-yajña- Self analysis of own actions and teaching about the vedas, The Gītā, Ramayana, or any other scriptures and by sharing knowledge with others

saṁśītavratāḥ - Involves taking up special vows which help sharpen one's mind and senses. A phrase used in vedas of 5 controls one should have, non violence, truth, non stealing, celibacy and refrain from hoarding. This falls under the requirements in achieving the 'Yama', the first step of Ashtanga yoga. People who follow this Yama are called **saṁśītavratāḥ**.

4.29

**apāne juhvati prāṇaṁ(m), prāṇe'pānaṁ(n) tathāpare,
prāṇāpānagatī ruddhvā, prāṇāyāmaparāyaṇāḥ. 4.29**

Others offer as sacrifice the outgoing breath in the incoming, and the incoming in the outgoing, restraining the course of the outgoing and the incoming breaths, solely absorbed in the restraint of the breath.

prāṇā yajñā - prāṇā is breath. The inward breath is termed as '**pooraka**' - Breathe IN and the outward breath is termed as '**Rechaka**' - breathe out; and holding the breathe after '**pooraka**' is termed as '**Kumbaka**'.

These are terms used in Prāṇāyama or the controlled breathing technique as a part of the Ashtanga Yoga to regulate breathing. The regulated breathing techniques has a set of rules where the 'breathe in' is done for a count of 4, holding the breathe for a count of 16 and breathe out for a count of 8.

This is also an yajñā for cleansing of mind and body. Some accomplished yogis even cease the functioning of prāṇā and āsana by perfecting the balance of breathing in and breathing out as an offering as yajñā.

4.30

**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.

āhāra yajñā - Yogis consume a well regulated diet. All those yogis who do not desire to crave for food are the true knowers of yajñā.

yajñā that burns our sins by holding prāṇā is called '**samādhi sthiti Prāṇayama**' (a state of intense concentration achieved through meditation and breath control) by absolute restraint of breath. However this is not to be tried without guidance. There are yogis who hold prāṇā for months or years and this is another type of yajñā. In this type of yajñā, all the impurities in the body are destroyed. Another example are the frogs that we see in rainy season. They disappear in summer season, most likely hiding beneath the soil and look dead. They are adept at holding the prāṇā for the whole period of summer season, and become active when it starts raining.

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?

Such yogis who have tasted the nectar of knowledge as a result of performing these yajñā will attain the Eternal Supreme Soul. Those who do not perform any type of yajñā and do not perform prescribed duties for such persons even this material world will not be a source of joy, neither can they receive joy in the world after death.

One is advised to start practicing on this very earth and in this very body no harbouring negativity for anyone or oneself. Do not question others demerits and accept them as per their nature. Do not criticise or comment. Each person behaves according to one's innate nature and karma; so move on without aversion for anyone.

The moment thoughts arise that other person is not good, the impressions keep running in our mind and end up wasting time and energy. Nothing is achieved. So Bhagavān advises not to harbour such sentiments and just look for the Brāhmaṇ within Oneself. We can be very rich in thoughts once we recognise this.

One should not have any attachment or expectation.

4.32

**evaṃ(m) bahavidhā yajñā, vitatā brahmaṇo mukhe,
karmajānviddhi tānsarvān, evaṃ(ñ) jñātvā vimokṣyase. 4.32**

Many such forms of sacrifice have been set forth in detail in the Vedas; know them all as involving the action of mind, senses and body. Thus, knowing the truth about them you shall be freed from the bondage of action (through their performance).

Having explained 12 types of yajnas Bhagavān said that all these yajnas have been explained in detail in Vedas (Brahmaṇo mukhe).

These 12 yajñās are a culmination of actions of mind, body and senses. There are many other types of yajñās, all borne out of action and karma which has to be performed as a yajñā to be liberated from the bondage of life and attain moksha (liberation from the cycle of birth and death). Such a person's life is full of joy, equanimity and peace of mind.

When such a person dies the soul will merge with the Supreme Soul and never descend on the earth again. The matter of significance is not which yajñā one choses to perform, but to lead the life with the awareness to surrender to the Cosmic Energy, the Supreme Soul where we are not the doer for a single moment.

One should leave the *bhava* (attitude) of *kartṛtva* (state of being a performer) and *bhokṛtva* (state of enjoying), and perform action as a duty or karma. The attitude of being a non doer and being detached will keep a person away from ego which is the root cause of rajasik and tamasik characteristic of guna.

4.33

śreyāndravyamayādyajñāj, jñānayajñāḥ(ph) parantapa, sarvaṃ(ñ) karmākhilaṃ(m) pārtha, jñāne parisamāpyate. 4.33

Arjuna, sacrifice through Knowledge, is superior to sacrifice performed with material things. For all actions without exception culminate in Knowledge, O son of Kuntī.

Bhagavān says that ***jñāna yajñā*** - the sacrifice of offering knowledge is a far superior type of yajñā. This is because all karmas or actions ultimately culminate in jñāna or knowledge. It is the culmination point of all actions.

Offering donations, doing work is fine, but it leads to fulfilment of material desires only. All types of yajñā are good but all are external tools which are meant for satisfying worldly desires, unlike jñāna yajñā. Those whose inner souls are purified only accrue the eligibility to receive knowledge of performing jñāna yajñā. All other yajñās are tools to reach this ultimate state after effectively performing the requisites.

Every person's objective is to be to remove ignorance and move up towards jñāna yajñā.

4.34

tadviddhi praṇipātena, paripraśnena sevayā, upadekṣyanti te jñānaṃ(ñ), jñāninastattvadarśinaḥ. 4.34

Understand the true nature of that Knowledge by approaching seers of Truth. If you prostrate at their feet, render them service, and question them with an open and guileless heart, those wise seers of Truth will instruct you in that Knowledge.

After discussing various sacrifices, Shri Bhagavān explains that sacrifices in knowledge are superior to material sacrifices. He then explains how and where one can attain the supreme knowledge of the Self. **HE suggests surrendering to a spiritually enlightened Guru with humility and faith.**

The Guru, also known as a **Brahma Jnani**, is indifferent to honor, but it is up to the seeker to follow the teachings and attain this knowledge after shedding the layers of ignorance accumulated over various lifetimes. Śrī Bhagavān refers to the Brahma Jnani as 'tattva-darsinah', a sage who knows the truth.

4.35

**yajjñātvā na punarmoham, evaṃ(m) yāsyasi pāṇḍava,
yena bhūtānyaśeṣeṇa, drakṣyasiātmanyatho mayi. 4.35**

Arjuna, when you have achieved enlightenment, ignorance will delude you no more. In the light of that knowledge, you will see the entire creation first within your own Self, and then in Me (the Oversoul).

The **Brahma Jnani** Guru gradually removes layers of ignorance, leading the disciple to **Tattva Jnana**, true knowledge. Ignorance feeds delusion, so getting rid of ignorance is essential to freeing oneself from Maya, the delusion. It is only after discarding this delusion that a new Advaitic perception of oneness with Paramātmā can develop.

4.36

**api cedasi pāpebhyaḥ(s), sarvebhyaḥ(ph) pāpakṛttamaḥ,
sarvaṃ(ñ) jñānaplavenaiva, vṛjinaṃ(m) santariṣyasi. 4.36**

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

An ignorant person lives by the ego of 'I, my, and me', and indulges in material life for the pleasure of the senses. Such a person keeps on augmenting sins. However, once such a person attains self-realization, he sails through this ocean of sins. All sins are committed out of ignorance, Brahmā Jnani comes out of this net of ignorance, he understands the futility of worldly material for a sense gratification.

Examples are plenty in our scriptures, when a sinner converts into Brahmā Jnani. Prominent among them is Rishi Valmiki, who converted from a cruel dacoit to a respected Maharshi.

4.37

**yathaidhāṃsi samiddho'gniḥ(r), bhasmasātkurute'rjuna,
jñānāgniḥ(s) sarVākarmāṇi, bhasmasātkurute tathā. 4.37**

For, as the blazing fire reduces the fuel to ashes, Arjuna, even so the fire of Knowledge turns all actions to ashes.

One accumulates a multitude of karmas in past lives and current life, due to ignorance. True knowledge has the power to eliminate these accumulated karmas. This process is similar to a fire burning a pile of wood to ashes. Similarly, Brahma Jnana can eradicate all karmas.

When we talk about knowledge in this context, we are not referring to information obtained from books or sermons. Atma Jnana, or self-realization, is a transcendental experience that cannot be shared. By letting go of the ego, Saṃskāras, karmas, and desires for materialistic objectives, one can attain a higher state of "**Nirvikalpa Samādhi**".

4.38

**na hi jñānena sadṛśaṃ(m), pavitrāmiha vidyate,
tatsvayaṃ(m) yogasaṃsiddhaḥ(kh), kālenātmani vindati. 4.38**

In this world there is no purifier as great as Knowledge; he who has attained purity of heart through prolonged practice of Karmayoga, automatically sees the light of Truth in the self in course of time.

Knowledge is the ultimate purifier of a person. Impurities accumulate as Saṃskāras and are carried from one birth to another. A self-realized individual is a true Jnani. Self-realization happens within, not in the external world. It cannot be acquired from books, scriptures, or sermons, even though they can act as guiding milestones. One has to embark on the journey alone to attain true knowledge.

The practices of **Ashtanga Yoga** and **Raja Yoga** are of immense importance, enabling a person to achieve this supreme knowledge, the ultimate purifier. If someone stops midway with the misconception that they have attained knowledge and chants “**Aham Brahmasmi,**” they are in a state of illusion, Tamas, and fall deeper into the cycle of Karmas.

4.39

**śraddhāvā~llabhate jñānaṃ(n), tatparaḥ(s) saṃyatendriyaḥ,
jñānaṃ(m) labdhvā parāṃ(m) śāntim, acireṇādhiḡacchati. 4.39**

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

Shraddha is a broad term meaning unflinching faith, carrying utmost importance in spiritual advancement. A person who is dedicated and subdues his senses becomes eligible to receive supreme knowledge. **Shraddha in our scriptures and in one's Guru is a prerequisite to treading the path of spirituality to attain self-realization.** Reading the Bhagavad Gītā without Shraddha may not help any aspirant. Shraddha does not mean denial of reason and judgment; it is an absence of hypothetical skepticism.

Without Shraddha, no one can make advances in the realms of spirituality. In Verse 28 Chapter 17, Śrī Bhagavān says:

अश्रद्धया हुतं दत्तं तपस्तप्तं कृतं च यत् |
असदित्युच्यते पार्थ न च तत्प्रेत्य नो इह ||

whatever acts of sacrifice, charity, or penance are done without faith, are termed as “Asat.” They are useless both in this world and the next.

4.40

**ajñāścāśraddadhānaśca, saṃśayātmā vinaśyati,
nāyaṃ(m) loko'sti na paro, na sukhaṃ(m) saṃśayātmanaḥ. 4.40**

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

A person who lacks knowledge and has a skeptical mindset remains trapped in the cycle of birth and death. Such a person is attached to material gains and sensual pleasures, and as a result, is unable to find true happiness in this world or the next.

4.41

**yogasannyastakarmāṇaṃ(ñ), jñānasañchinnasaṃśayam,
ātmavantaṃ(n) na karmāṇi, nibadhnanti dhanañjaya. 4.41**

Arjuna, actions do not bind him who has dedicated all his actions to God according to the spirit of Karmayoga, whose doubts have been dispelled by wisdom and who is self-possessed.

The wheel of karma does not bind a person who performs worldly duties for Paramātmā and surrenders all fruits to HIM.

"Yoga-Sannyasta-Karmāṇam" means renouncement of karma and dedicating body, mind, and soul to Paramātmā. Such a person works without a sense of doership and any desire for the fruits of such work. All doubts are cleared the moment true knowledge is attained. He is free from the bondage of karma.

4.42

**tasmādajñānasambhūtaṃ(m), hṛtsthaṃ(ñ) jñānāsinātmanaḥ,
chittvainaṃ(m) saṃśayaṃ(m) yogam, ātiṣṭhottiṣṭha bhārata. 4.42**

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

One should be established in this **Samata buddhi yoga**. Interaction with the outside world should be done with equanimity, and not by bias of kith and kin or love or dislike.

Being equipoised is the key.

Equipoised even in happiness or sorrow is advised by Bhagavān. In chapter 5 Shloka 20 also Bhagavān says:

न प्रहृष्येत्प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत्प्राप्य चाप्रियम् ।
स्थिरबुद्धिरसम्मूढो ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मणि स्थितः ॥

Established in God, having a firm understanding of divine knowledge and not hampered by delusion, they neither rejoice in getting something pleasant nor grieve on experiencing the unpleasant.

Śrī Bhagavān emphasizes the importance of wisdom and knowledge in dispelling doubts arising from ignorance. He explains that a person of knowledge can discern between the body and the soul. HE also highlights the significance of performing actions without attachment or desires, while maintaining equanimity in all circumstances to attain freedom from the bondage of Karmas. Furthermore, HE advises Arjuna to accept both favorable and unfavorable situations with equanimity, illustrating that a person with true knowledge, firmly established in Paramātmā, remains unaffected by the outcomes of their actions, performing duties as a service to Paramātmā and surrendering the

fruits of such actions to HIM.

Questions and Answers:

Anil Ji

Q: How is Sloka 34 relevant for controlling our thought process?

A: In this chapter 12 types of Yajnas were discussed. A person can advance in his spiritual journey by performing any of the 12 types of yajnas discussed in this chapter. Those who are unable to perform any of these, can surrender to a Tattva-darshini sage as a seeker of knowledge, and learn how to advance in the spiritual path towards true knowledge.

Geetha Ji

Q: What is Jnana and what is the boat of knowledge to sail through the samsara?

A: Jnana implies the realization of the distinction between body and soul and its relationship with Paramātmā. Once we realize it, we will know who the actual doer of all karma is, and who is the rightful owner of the fruits arising out of it. The ego that 'I am the doer' disappears, and hence no desire for fruits of such Karma will remain. Such a person is liberated from the bondage of Karmas and sails through the Maya of this Samsara.

Sreevidya Ji

Q: What are Prāṇa and Apana?

A: Prāṇa and Apana are inhaling and exhaling processes of breathing respectively.

Q: How can we find which Yajna out of 12 Yajnas suits an individual?

A: The simplest Yajna is Svadhyaya, i.e. to study oneself. One can withdraw from the external world, close the eyes, and contemplate on "Who am I?". One should also study scriptures and follow them. This yajna does not need any elaborate arrangement; Knowing oneself is divine knowledge.

**Om tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu brahmavidyāyāṃ(m)
yogaśāstre śrīkrṣṇārjunasaṃvāde jñānakarmasannyāsayogonāma
caturtho'dhyāyaḥ**



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Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar - Creative Writing Department

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