

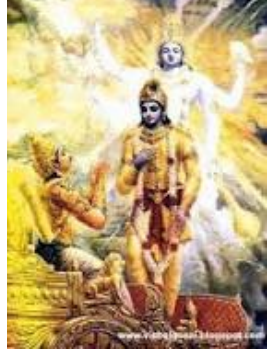
Swami Dayatmananda on Bhagavad Gita Class 50 date 24/11/18
(Lecture is delivered online from Bangalore India)

Class begins with chanting of slokas and prayers

Let me briefly summarise what we have discussed so far. Arjuna, was suffering because of **moha**, or delusion. Suffering, inevitably, springs from delusion. Delusion springs from egotism, and egotism springs from ignorance.

So what is the remedy for delusion?

The remedy for ignorance is the destruction of the root cause of all types of suffering, which is **agjnana**, or ignorance. And ignorance can be destroyed with the help of **jnana**, or knowledge, self-knowledge. So the 2nd chapter begins by Bhagwan Krishna, looking to help Arjuna. But Sri Krishna cannot really help Arjuna until he is in a position to receive His Teachings.



Arjuna's Folly	Arjuna's realisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• he has been suffering• he doesn't really have any remedy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• understood that he needed help (which he got from Sri Krishna)• he also had the confidence in Sri Krishna• he surrendered himself to Sri Krishna

If somebody really wants to surrender to God, he must fulfil at least 4 conditions :-

1. There must be a fixed goal, with a strong intention.
2. He must have absolute focus or concentration.
3. He must have self discipline.
4. He must have absolute obedience to what the Lord or Guru dictates.

And this is what Arjuna had done. We see Arjuna surrendering in the 7th verse of Chapter 2 :-

शिष्यस्तेऽहं शधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् || Ch. 2.7||

śiṣhyaste 'haṁ śhādhi māṁ tvāṁ prapannam

[Now I am Your disciple, and a soul surrendered unto You. Please instruct me.]

Only, and only after this complete self-surrender, does the Lord deal with Arjuna's delusion, which he does so from 3 angles. There is a beautiful statement made by Hanuman and which Sri Ramakrishna quotes :-

Once, Sri Rama asked Hanuman, " Hanuman, how do you look upon me?"

Hanuman gives a beautiful reply :-

देहबुद्ध्या तु दासोऽस्मि जीवबुद्ध्या त्वदंशकः। आत्मबुद्ध्या त्वमेवाहमिति मे निश्चिता मतिः॥

Deha-Buddhyaa Tu Daso.smi Jiva-Buddhyaa Tvad-Anshakah |

Aatma-Buddhyaa Tvam-Evaaham Iti Me Nishchita Matih ||

O Lord,

- when I feel I am the body, then I am your servant and You are My Master;
- when I feel I am the conscious Jiva, having a body-mind, then I feel You are The Whole and I am the Part, then I am an **Anshakah** of yours
- But when I know I am the Atman, the Pure Consciousness, I know that I am You, there is absolutely no difference between You and Me.”

And that is what Bhagwan Krishna also brings to the fore, in the problem of dealing with Arjuna. Arjuna's problem was delusion, he was attached to some people and he hated some people. For example, he didn't want to harm Bhishma or Drona but he would not have hesitated for a second to finish off Duryodana or Dushasana (from the gang of 4).

In normal life, all of us suffer from this **raaga** and **dvesha** and this what we call delusion, **moha**.

So, how do we deal with this problem? The Lord gives us the solution, depending on who we think we are.

Firstly,

Deha Buddhya Dasuham : “O Arjuna, it is absolutely unnecessary for you to feel grief, that you are going to be the instrument causing the death of Drona, Bhishma and others whom you love. So long as you think you are a body, you cannot help but feel that everyone else is also a body. And every body is born at some time, it changes in course of time, and is sure to die a very natural death. Therefore, whether you like it or not, Bhishma, Drona are going to die, sooner or later. But it is better for you to perform your own duty, and that will be conducive for your own good.”

This is the first angle, for people who think they are no other than body and mind.

The second angle is :-

“I am Jiva, Consciousness, with a body and mind”. Such a person doesn't say that “I am the body or I am the mind”; he says “I am the Consciousness having a body-mind complex”. How do we know that a person is having this kind of faith or belief? The proof is, that such a person looks at how to avoid hell and how to acquire heaven? Belief in heaven or hell is definite proof that death is not going to be the end of this body but merely a temporary change of the body and if I follow the righteous path in my life and discharge my duties, according to the instructions of the scriptures, then I am sure to go to heaven!

Of course, we all know that the body does not go to heaven; it is the mind that goes to heaven and there also a new body appropriate for enjoying all the heavenly enjoyments will be taken up there.

So, those who think “I am not the body-mind but I have a body-mind”, such a person is called a Jiva. For such a person, O Arjuna, lead a dharmic life, a righteous life,

discharge your duties in the most appropriate way that is possible. As a result, you will enjoy life both here and hereafter.

The same thing also applies to Bhishma and Drona. As you already know, they have led a pure, dharmic and righteous life most of the time. So, even if you happen to kill them, really you cannot kill them, because they will die in their own proper time, due to their karma phala. Even if you happen to kill them, they will be thanking you because you will be helping them to attain heavenly life.

This is from the viewpoint from all those people who think that they are Jivas, having a body-mind complex.

The third and highest angle is :-

Those who think, “ I am not the body, I am not the mind, I am not an individual soul but I am the pure ***akanda sacchidananda parabrahma paramatma***. If you have that kind of understanding, then you are bound to look upon Bhishma, Drona, Duryodana and Dushasana and everybody else - that they are also Atman.

Why? Because a person that has got the Atmic view, cannot help but to experience everyone as a manifestation of the Divine Self only. So there is no birth, there is no growth, there is no change, there is absolutely no death at all for an Atman. Neither is there happiness or unhappiness, nor there is any limitation to the amount of bliss - he is of the very nature of ***parama ananda swaroopam***.

Therefore there is no need for you to grieve at all.

Recording time 10.03.

Having said this, the Lord also, anticipates Arjuna's question who says, “ You are talking about the Self, could you kindly describe the characteristics of the Atman.” That is what the Lord, beautifully enumerates from chapter 2 verse 16 to almost verse 30 :-

Characteristics of the Self

“The Unreal never Is, the Real never is not”

“ That by which all This is pervaded, That know for certain to be indestructible and immutable.”

“ This willing Self, is the ever changeless, the Indestructible, the Illimitable.”

“ The Self neither slays, nor is it slayed.”

“ The Self is never born, nor does it die.”

“ It is changeless.”

“Even, as a man casts off worn out cloths, and puts on a new dress, so also, what we call death, is casting off of the old, worn out body and obtaining a new body - this is called ***punarjanma***. We will continue to do this phenomenon until we really know we are the Self.”

“ This Self, cannot be cut by weapons, nor fire can burn it, water wets it not and the wind dries not the Self”.

“ It is Changeless, All-Pervading, Unmoving, Immovable, Eternal, Un-manifested, Unthinkable and Unchangeable.”

“But, even should you take this Self, to have constant birth and death, even in that case, O mighty armed Arjuna, you ought not to mourn for this, because, for whatever is born, for that death is certain. And we all know, whatever comes into existence, is bound to go out of existence.”

“ And what we really cannot know, we can only know from the Scriptures”.

Having faith in the Scriptures is that death is not the end of life - whatever is dead is again going to be reborn. That is what the Lord assures. Therefore, this Self, which is an in-dweller in the bodies of all, is ever indestructible.

So, knowing the Self to be such, there is no need for you to mourn. On the other hand, it will and should give you a definite goal - that if that is the Truth, that is Tat tvam, then I must know my real nature, which is pure. Such a person, who knows that he is the Atman itself, becomes free from all delusions, from all sufferings, and enjoys the unimaginable bliss, infinite bliss, for eternity.

And, if that is the Truth, to know that you are the Atman, and not the body-mind complex, is the only goal of life. Naturally, having heard descriptions of the Self, and also having the conviction that what the Lord says is true, and saying to oneself :-

“ I am the Self, this I take on faith as I am not yet Realised and therefore it should be the goal of my life.”

The whole description of the Self is for the sake of Sadhana, or spiritual practice. For that, Arjuna asks a very natural question :-

“ Are there such people, who can prove that really, I am the Atman? And if there are such people, who are called saints or God-realised souls, then what is the proof if I happen to meet such a person, what is the way for me to recognise such a person? How can I recognise a man of Samadhi, a man of self-knowledge, an Atmajnani? Or a man of steadfast wisdom?”

This phrase, steadfast wisdom, is a most marvellous phrase. Our wisdom is going up and down, clouded sometimes, bright at other times, but it is liable to change due to various circumstances. But once a man knows the Truth, there is no such change at all.

So the Lord gives a graphic, beautiful, crystal clear description of a man of **sthitaprajna**, steadfast wisdom. Such a person is called a Realised soul, a Jivanmukta. So if that is the case, the goal is to know that I am the Divine, and that is what Swami Vivekananda summarised in his famous phrase...

“Each soul is potentially Divine”...and if that statement is true, then the only goal of life can be none else but to manifest that Divinity within, gradually. This manifestation of the Divinity, through life, through work, through discharging our duties properly, is called Sadhana and that is called Karmayoga.

The goal is to know that I am Divine, and in order to have that Self-Knowledge, one has to acquire the necessary spiritual qualifications, which very naturally, every Realised Soul manifests automatically, instinctively, without thinking. How could he do that - because he had practiced over many, many lives in acquiring these qualities and through long practice, they have become what we call in psychological language, secondary nature, **abhyasa**, and those qualities naturally manifest.

So, Karmayoga, helps us in acquiring these necessary spiritual qualities. The Lord, also in the 2nd chapter, condemns Karma - meaning those who are devoted to rituals

and hope to go to heaven and enjoy there. The Lord tells, even such enjoyments, are but very, very temporary.

I hope we remember, that Lord Yamadharmarajah, offers such wonderful enjoyments, which a human being cannot even imagine in his brightest brain. Without a blink of the eye, Nachiketa rejects them absolutely and thereby, Yamadharmarajah knows that he is a person, who is fit to be taught Self-Knowledge.

So the purpose of Karmayoga, is to gradually make out, acquire these necessary spiritual qualities. Unless we across such people, we won't be inspired. And if we have a desire for Self-Realisation, **Atmajnana**, the Lord is sure to, make no doubt about it at all, make us come into contact with such a person.

Sri Ramakrishna's life proves conclusively, he was so earnest in realising the Divine Mother, as a result of which the Divine Mother brought all the Gurus, all the help needed. We know this by reading the life of Sri Ramakrishna. The purpose is, that even if a person, is in such a place, where there is really no hope of meeting anybody, of getting any guidance, the Lord somehow provides that necessary help, at the necessary time, in necessary quantities, and gradually, he will bring him to His own Lotus Feet, and makes him **sthitaprajna**, a man of Samadhi.

So, I was mentioning, Lord Krishna condemns Karma. Karma means, those who are devoted to the first part of the Vedas, called Karmakanda, whose only purpose is to have a better type of enjoyment and thereafter go to heaven.

But the Lord is warning : heaven is not a permanent, eternal happiness, nor is it a complete happiness. It's ok, it has its own place in life, but if you are serious about eternal, infinite happiness, you should be able to renounce it. Many times, the scriptures use condemnation, not for criticising or condemning, but for praising the opposite idea.

So here, to praise the spiritual endeavour, these things are condemned by the Lord and it is to encourage people, that unless we give up (worldly, temporary happiness) may be not immediately, but slowly and gradually, there is no hope of Amrita :-

amritatvasya tu nashasti vittena

अमृतत्वस्य तु नाशास्ति वित्तेन

(**Meaning:** Wealth is not the way to eternal happiness.)

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 2.4.2

(recording time 20:37)

Sri Krishna, then extols Arjuna to live properly, to act rightly, with a spiritual attitude, and this is called Karmoyoga in brief, which we will dwell on in future. But how to fight? To fight doesn't just mean the battlefield, it also refers to whatever activity we have to do in our day to day lives from morning till we fall asleep.

So, the Lord tells, and I am quoting from the 2nd chapter :-

सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ | ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि || 2.38||

sukha-duḥkhe same kṛtvā lābhālābhau jayājayau

tato yuddhāya yujyasva naivaṁ pāpam avāpsyasi

“Having made pain and pleasure, gain and loss, conquest and defeat, we say, engage yourself then in battle, so shall you incur no sin”.

Sin, in this context, means remaining bound to this world, which from the spiritual point of view is the greatest bondage.

एषा तेऽभिहिता साङ्ख्ये बुद्धियोगे त्विमां शृणु | बुद्ध्या युक्तो यया पार्थ कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि || 2.39||

eṣhā te 'bhihitā sāṅkhye buddhir yoge tvimāṁ śrīṇu

buddhyā yukto yayā pārtha karma-bandhaṁ prahāsyasi

“The wisdom of Self-Realisation, has been declared here unto you. Hear now the wisdom of yoga, endured with which, O Partha, you shall break through the bonds of karma”.

In this practice of Karmayoga, there is no waste or unfinished attempt, nor is there production of contrary results. Even, a bit of practice, a bit of this Dharma, protects one from great fear. Then comes one of the most wonderful verses in the whole literature of spirituality :-

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन | मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि || 2.47 ||

karmaṇy-evādhikāras te mā phaleṣhu kadāchana

mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr mā te saṅgo 'stvakarmaṇi

This verse should be understood, and indeed all these verses, are addressed to a sincere spiritual aspirant, not for worldly people. Though, if worldly people also practice a little bit of this, they will not suffer so much. In fact, their enjoyment or happiness, gets enhanced.

So the Lord says, you have a right only to the work, but never to the fruits thereof. As a result of this, may you not be motivated by the fruits of actions, nor let your attachments grow you towards laziness or inaction.

Normally, human beings will not do any action, unless they expect something. So, how do we practice and discharge one's duties, without expecting anything. It doesn't really mean the results will not come. All that the Lord means, is that every action must and will yield its results. But where, when and in what form we may not know - that is what the Lord is telling here.

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय | सिद्धसिद्धोः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते || 2.48||

yoga-sthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgaṁ tyaktvā dhanañjaya

siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ yoga uchyate

“ Be steadfast in yoga, O Arjuna! Perform the actions, abandoning attachment, remaining unconcerned as regards success and failure. This evenness of mind is known as yoga!”

So, **samatvaṁ**, this is one of the best definitions of yoga. **Samatvaṁ** means equanimity, balance of the mind, not losing one's sense of harmony, one's sense of balance, at any time and under any circumstances. Then, the Lord tells another definition of yoga, He says :-

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते | तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् || 2.50||

*buddhi-yukto jahātīha ubhe sukṛita-duṣhkṛite
tasmād yogāya yujyasva yogaḥ karmasu kauśhalam*

“ Endowed with this evenness of buddhi, one frees oneself in this very life, alike from virtue and vice. So Arjuna, devote yourself to this yoga.”

What yoga - Karmayoga. Here, the Lord uses the second best definition of yoga, which is called **yogaḥ karmasu kauśhalam**.

Here, yoga is dexterity in action. What does that mean? That means, you perform, you discharge all your duties in such a way that, they will not give you the usual result of any action. But every action will only yield one result, that is, they will take you gradually and slowly to God's feet.

In other words, progress in spiritual life is called : **performance of actions with skilfulness**, that is the real meaning.

Now, this is the essence of the 1st and 2nd chapters.

Third Chapter of Bhagavat Gita named Karma-Yoga

Recording time 26 minutes

So, we are going to discuss the Third Chapter of Bhagavat Gita.

This Chapter has got 43 *slokas* or verses and it is very aptly named as **Karma-Yoga**.

What is कर्म-योगा Karma-Yoga?

So let me summarise, first of all, What is Karma-Yoga?

Essence of Karma-Yoga:

It is that skilful way of performing yoga, which ultimately takes us to God realisation, to आत्मज्ञान **Atma Jyana**, to आत्मानुभूति **Atma-anubhuti**, to समाधि **Samadhi**. That is the essence of Karma-Yoga.

Why do we need Karma-Yoga?

So naturally, the question comes in our minds, why Karma-yoga? Why don't we try to directly meditate and go?

The Lord Shri Krishna is not saying "No" but he is saying that it is absolutely ok if you have the qualifications to sit and meditate. But, as I have seen you already (Arjuna means all of us) our minds are restless, fully attached and subjected to slavery to praise, blame and criticism. When things are going alright then we become excited and when things are going down then we are prone to be depressed.

What is अनुशादा Anushada and अनुदर्शा Anudharsha

Anushada and Anudharsha, are necessary for even Bhaktas.
Anushada means- not becoming depressed.
Anudharsha means - not getting too excited.
Karma-Yoga should help us to acquire these qualities.

Relationship between Second and third chapters of the Bhagavat Gita

Now, what is the relationship between the second and third chapters of The Bhagavat Gita?

First chapter is about the **problem**.

Second chapter is about the **solution**. Ultimate solution is to make a person know, who he is?

This is so that from eternity, he will be free from the bondage of karma. However, all of us are not ready.

Our ultimate goal should be to reach God. We can call it as God realisation or Atma-Jyana or Self-knowledge or Self realisation or Nirvikalpa Samadhi and we can give any number of names.

But, where are we? That is the point (question) we have to take into the consideration.

Teachings of Swami Vivekananda:

So, as Swami Vivekananda used to say "First you should have an ultimate goal. But, once you have fixed your goal, let it go. Now, you must give your attention to the approximate goal, never ever think about the ultimate goal. Always fix your attention on the very next step you have to take, not even on what is the second step or the third step, let alone the ultimate goal."

What is संगति *Sangati*?

The Karma Yoga of the third chapter begins by equipping every sincere aspirant with the necessary spiritual qualifications so that he/she can move forward. This moving forward can take place through any of the four Yogas known as Karma-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, Raj-Yoga and Jyana-Yoga. This is the relationship. In Sanskrit there is a beautiful word Called *Sangati*. Every good speaker, every good writer, whether he writes or speaks, he must move step by step in the most logical reasonable way.

Progress from the Second to the Third chapter:

The progress from the second to the third chapter is: Atma-Jyana is your final goal (second chapter) but you are far below your final goal. Therefore, you must start with Karma and Karma-Yoga (third chapter).

My plan

I am going to give you, first of all a brief description then a detailed description of this third chapter.

Why I am taking so much trouble instead of plugging directly into the third chapter? Because once you can understand this then I can assure you that you will have a crystal clear idea as to what the third chapter of Karma-Yoga is all about. Later on, not only with the third chapter of the Bhagavat Gita but any time if you will come across this word of Karma-Yoga in any other book or scripture then you will have the doubtless, clear, without any ambiguity, right understanding of Karma-Yoga. That is why, I am taking all this trouble. This is what I will do with every other chapter that is going to come.

Back to our topic;

What is Karma-Yoga? What is यज्ञ Yajna or Sacrifice?

To put it in the mildest way, our entire life must be converted into a **Yajna यज्ञ or Sacrifice**.

Why should we convert our life into Yajna or Sacrifice?

Because we have to understand, what is the nature of *Yajna*?

The English translation of यज्ञ *Yajna* is sacrifice. **So, what is the true sacrifice?** Usually, the word sacrifice gives us an idea that we are giving up something very precious and also we will be losing something in return. That thought should never occur in our minds.

Actually, our thought should be: sacrifice means moving from a lower step to a higher step. Sacrifice or Yajna is to progress gradually in our spiritual life and ultimately reach the knowledge of God. Whatever helps us to reach to the that (knowledge of God) is called the **Yajna or Sacrifice**.

Definition of Yajna:

That action which helps us to manifest our innate divinity is called Yajna.

Bhagwan Shri Krishna has taken this particular meaning and very soon in the third chapter Lord is going to tell us that those who live a life of *Yajna* are blessed and those who do not, are stupid people and they have to roam in this bondage of Karma for a long time.

Yajna or Sacrifice is made possible only through the instrumentality of body & mind and we should know, how we should use our body and mind. Naturally our body-mind complex will be doing its actions whether we wish it or not because that is the nature of the body-mind. Body-mind will never keep quiet for a single second even if we are sleeping.

Even our sleep is also a manifestation of Karma of the body-mind. Therefore, we have to clearly understand this subject before we go to the concept of the Karma-Yoga.

What is Karma or action? Recording time 33.43 minutes

We have used this word 'Karma' a number of times perhaps without any understanding or with only a bit of understanding. Let us understand it clearly.

Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) makes it very clear for us.

What is Karma?

" Whatever is done through thoughts, speech and actions is called Karma."
By Swami Vivekananda

Akarma means no-action. No-action or *Akarma* is impossible for any living creatures.

Akarma or no-action is only possible when a person is dead.

Death means प्राण *Prana* has departed from the body and only then there is no action.

So, from our birth to death when we are breathing or our blood is flowing in our blood vessels and our heart is beating etc, so many functions are going on even though we may not be aware of them.

Life is nothing but the manifestation of Karma.

Whatever is done by the body and mind is called **Karma**. Therefore, Karma is unavoidable until this प्राण *Prana* departs from the body and as a result of this departure of *Prana*, the body really becomes useless for the performance of any Karma. Therefore, our whole life is nothing but the manifestation of Karma.

Life is full of Karma but what is life?

Another interesting question was raised: Life is full of Karma but what is life?

This question was once asked by the Maharaja of Khetri to his Guru Swami Vivekananda

"Swamiji Maharaj', what is life?" Recording 35.26 minutes

Swamiji gave the most marvellous answer: **"Life is the unfoldment of a being under circumstances tending to precede down. The implications are many."**

First implication is: life is a continuous evolution.

Second implication is: It is like standing on an escalator. That means, you cannot stop but you will have to move forwards inevitably and this is called evolution. We are standing on this escalator called evolution.

Third implication is: If we do not put forth sufficient effort then we will be suffering and paying the price with heavy suffering.

Fourth implication is: whether we want it or not, we have no choice but to know, who we are?

That means, we have no choice whether we want to be spiritual or secular. The only choice is, do we want to know our real nature now or after our next birth or after millions of births?

That choice is probably there but I am not too sure about this.

Swami Vivekananda also quotes somewhere else about what is life?

Love is life and hatred is death, meaning if we are loving only then are we living. **Strength is life and weakness is death**, meaning we are living only when we are strong.

At some other time Swami Vivekananda had answered in a different way.

Expansion is life, growth is life & contraction is death.

Further, Swami Vivekananda gives us three beautiful definitions of what is life? Swamiji says:

First: life is a **school**.

Second: life is a **gymnasium**; and

Third: life is a **circus**, in that order.

What is a School?

A school is a place where we learn our lessons.

What is a Gymnasium?

A gymnasium is where we strengthen our muscles through proper regular exercise for our moral, intellectual and spiritual muscles. When we really do that then we will be slowly approaching Self-knowledge or God-realisation. Once we realise God, the purpose of gymnasium is over and then life becomes a circus.

What is meant by Circus?

It is not really a beautiful word but there is a Sanskrit word which is very beautiful and it is called *Lila*. So, after God-realisation, we can participate in the divine Lila. This is also called शरणागति *Sharanagati*. Just incidentally, I am telling you or reminding you rather, that for a person who surrenders truly, life must be a life of joy, not a life of reluctant surrender. Because he sees everything as a divine sport.

Now, I will come back to our subject of “**whole life is nothing but Karma**”. Let me remind you here, there is a beautiful story of the perennial labourer called Sisyphus.

Recording time 38.50 minutes

Story of Sisyphus - A Greek Hero

Greek Mythology has an interesting character called Sisyphus. There is a story of this peculiar character.

He was a Greek man. He was the King of Corinth and the son of Aeolus. He was such a cunning swindler that he cheated the Gods again and again and even once cheated death himself. The Gods finally succeeded in dispatching him to hades (the underworld or what we call hell) where, as a punishment for his wicked deeds, he was made to roll a huge stone up a hill. However, this stone was always escaping him near the top of the hill and rolled down to the beginning of the hill again. He had to come down again and roll the huge stone up again and was made to go through this process again and again for all eternity. This was his punishment. He is supposed to still be there, trying in vain to roll the stone up to the top of the hill.

What is the point of this story?

Our life is also very much like that of poor Sisyphus. Life after life and if we believe Hindu scriptures, then at least for 84 lakhs (8400000) births and deaths we have been going through this karma. From birth to death, from morning till the next morning, we are working and working endlessly. Can we put an end to this? Yes we can! When we can convert that karma into yoga. When our karma can be transformed into Karma-Yoga then very soon our labours will come to an end and we will have eternal rest called *Mukti or Moksha*.

Do we not often feel that our life is nothing but a stream of never-ending work as futile as Sisyphus' labour? Day after day we work and yet we do not seem to reach anywhere. So then why are we working at all?

***Prakriti* प्रकृति or Nature or प्रधाना *Pradhana* does all the work.**

We are helplessly working. **We** are not actually doing work; it is nature or prakriti or *pradhana* that is doing work but we are unnecessarily poking our noses into it and saying " It is not prakriti doing this, it is me." We will explore this idea much later on.

What is the goal of work?

Our heart hungers for everlasting peace, security and happiness and we work hard for the attainment of this and yet fulfilment always seem to allude us.

What is the cause of this typical human situation?

There is an inborn aspiration within each one of us, to experience Sat-Chit-Ananda or to say immortality, pure consciousness and eternal bliss. But why is it that we are foiled? Because we are not acting properly. We are doing karma but we are not doing Karma-Yoga.

Whenever we do karma it gives us both results सुखा दुखा Sukha Dukha, happiness and unhappiness, health and ill health, prosperity and poverty, scholarship and illiteracy. We have to dance with the waves of the संसार-सागरा *Sansara-sagara*.

Work done in a wise way is called Karma-Yoga. In other words, until we convert every action of ours into a specific discipline called spiritual discipline, there will be no release from bondage. Until that time, karma or action will become a drag on the soul and a drain on one's spiritual resources.

Pravyeti प्रवृत्ति and Nivyrti निवृत्ति

Our scriptures give us crystal clear directions. We have to evolve slowly and gradually. Our scriptures have divided our life into **Pravyeti प्रवृत्ति and Nivyrti निवृत्ति**.

Pravyeti means, how to focus our actions so that they (our actions) can give us more happiness in this world and produce less negative reaction.

Nivyrti means, we reach a state where we do not wish to have anything to do. This is not because we are unable to attain but because we know that we do not need it. When a person says "I don't want to do any work" then there may be a negative impulsion.

However, when a person is perfectly happy or संतुष्ट है *Santushta hai* and says "I do not need the results." such a person is called a संयासी *Sannyasi* and that kind of lifestyle is called *Nivyrti*.

So if we can convert our life first into *Pravyeti* and gradually later on into *Nivyrti* then this would mean that we will be making progress in our spiritual life.

Important point: If we want to go any further then I would like to add a simple point.

Does *Pravyeti* keep us bound to this world? The answer is, 'No' if we follow scriptural instructions. However, it will definitely land us in trouble if we will do whatever we would like to do.

But, if we follow scriptural instructions without any deviation then they (our actions) are bound to take us gradually from the lifestyle called *Pravyeti* or secular activities done through the help of scriptures into *Nivyrti* that means to say I do not need anything of this world, I only want God.

Now, further about the Karma-Yoga [Recording 44.42 minutes](#).

Does Karma-Yoga lead to liberation?

Once **Swami Turiyananda** was asked "Does Karma-Yoga leads to liberation?"

He said "Yes".

The question was put to him. But previously, no Acharya and no scripture ever told us that Karma-Yoga directly leads to liberation. Every teacher emphasised that Karma-Yoga is only to purify the mind but not to directly lead to liberation. When a person's mind becomes pure then it will allow him to enter into any one of the two major paths either Bhakti-Yoga or Jyana-Yoga.

Swami Turiyanandaji said "Let it be so" but since these words came out of the mouth of Swami Vivekananda, from that day Karma-Yoga has also acquired the same validity and it will directly lead us from bondage to liberation without going through the medium of any other yoga.

So, one of the first great tasks that Swami Vivekananda had to face at the end of the 19th Century, was to convert अद्वैत वेदांता *Adwaita Vedanta* into an integrating, comprehensive, dynamic and practical philosophy which would enable the people to solve not only their day to day problems of life but also every problem - be it social, economical, psychological or any other problem. These can be solved with the help of *Adwaita Vedanta* put into practice and also called Karma-Yoga.

A वेदवाणी Veda-vani of Shri Ramakrishna: Shiva Jyaney Jiva Seva

Our devotees can recall how this came about.

Once Shri Ramakrishna was talking about the three main tenets of *Vaishnavism* and he said, the first is नामें रुची/ **namey ruchi i.e.** taste in God's name, the second is वैश्नव सेवा **vaishnava seva i.e.** service to fellow-devotees and the third is जीवे दया **jivey daya i.e.** compassion towards unfortunate beings who are secular people. Shri Ramakrishna thoroughly approved of the first two i.e. नामें रुची/ **namey ruchi** one must delight in the name of God and वैश्नव सेवा **vaishnava seva** one must definitely serve fellow devotees, which is to call cultivation of holy company.

A Veda-vani of Shri Ramakrishna: However when it came to the third tenet, he went into deep samadhi, came out and then he made a remarkable statement/a VedaVani, that "No, no, not compassion, you are a worm, what right have you got to feel compassion, not compassion but **Shiva Jyaney Jiva Seva** Service to Shiva in the form of man."

Of course, it does not only apply to man. Whether you are having a cow or a dog or a bird or a pet or a plant etc, do not look upon it as an instrument of your pleasure but look upon everything as a manifestation of Lord Siva. After all, the word **Vishnu** means all pervading. Therefore, if God is all pervading then everything automatically is God only. Everything is God because God is everything.

Narendra Nath (future Swami Vivekananda) heard it. He came out and said "Today I have received the greatest illumination on the very near debate as to whether man has free will or not and on the conflict between the three yogas Karma, Bhakti and Jyana."

Shri Ramakrishna beautifully harmonised these three and said that those who look upon anybody, any person, any living creature and in fact any non-living entity like a river, a mountain or a forest etc. as a manifestation of Lord Shiva (means God) then he will be harmoniously combining Karma-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga and Jyana-Yoga.

It is this Karma-Yoga which directly leads man from bondage to liberation and which has become the main foundation of The Ramakrishna Order ***Atmano Mokshartham***

आत्मनो मोक्षार्थम् *and Jagat Hitaye cha* जगत हिताये च for realising ones Own-Self through serving the world by looking upon it as Shiva.

So, all our thoughts and actions flow through every stream of life but very few people are aware of this.

(There seems a short disruption in the recording here.)

Where can I see God?

This is a most wonderful point. One of the questions which was raised was "**Where can I see God?**"

Keno-Upanishad gives a beautiful answer, that every thought any man thinks is the manifestation of the Self only.

That means, with every single milli-second, we are only experiencing The Self but in the form of a thought. If Brahman is everything then every experience, every thought, every action, every breath, every imagination, every dream, even the experience of deep sleep is nothing but the revelation of The Atman.

This is one of the most wonderful revelations given to us by Swami Vivekananda. Of course, it is not a new idea but he brings it to the fore so that we all can be aware of it.

'Vipasana' Buddhist Meditation:

I can remind you, some of you perhaps have attended **Vipasana** - a Buddhist meditational retreat.

In these retreats, they say, do not do anything but focus upon what you are already doing, observe yourself, be a witness, and this is what has been expressed there.

If you become a witness, to everything that is going on, every action, every movement of the body, every thought, every single thing that is emanating from you even fluttering of the eyelids, then there will come a time when you will not feel that you are the witness but you are **The Self**.

Witness or Sakshi साक्षी becomes परमात्मा Parmatma. That is the Goal. It is a beautiful idea, some of you can think back, there is a lot to be said about it but I am not going into it.

Summary of Gita Class 50:

What is Karma-Yoga?

Karma-Yoga is to become aware of our own innate 'Self' through every activity, be it a thought, a speech, a sound or any activity.

If we practice Karma-Yoga, this will bring a change in our character.

Swami Vivekananda as we all know has given a series of most marvellous lectures on Karma-Yoga which can be obtained as a book called Karma-Yoga.

He (Swami Vivekananda) starts with his first chapter named - **What is the relationship between Karma and Character?**

The purpose of Karma-Yoga is to bring about a root change in our character. When our character is changed, our every action will take a spiritual dimension which gradually will take us to our ultimate goal.

Today, I have briefly spoken some particular points about:

- 1) **What is Karma?**
- 2) **What is Karma-Yoga?**

- 3) **How to convert every action into a Karma-Yoga?**
4) **What is the result of practicing Karma-Yoga?**

I could only speak very briefly. There are some more points which I will be speaking in our next online class. I hope to finish the introduction in our next class. Then onwards, it will be very easy to understand the third chapter.

Class ends with these most practical teachings about Karma and Karma-Yoga.
To be cont'd,

**Vasudeva sutham devam kamsa Chanoora mardhanam,
Devaki paramanandam Krishnam vande Jagat Gurum.**

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम् । देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥

May Shri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother and Swamiji bless us all.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

With kind regards

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