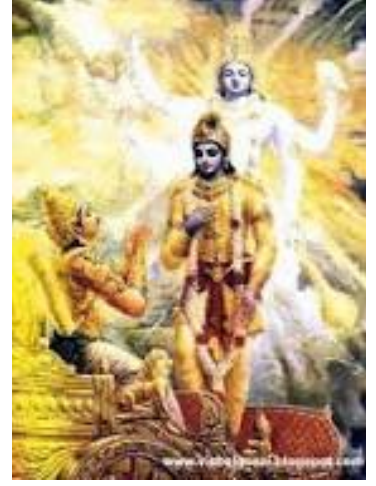


Swami Dayatmananda on Bhagavad Gita Class 54 date 26/1/18

(Lecture is delivered online from Bangalore India)

Class begins with chanting of slokas and prayers

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम् । देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥ 5॥
Vasudeva sutham devam kamsa Chanoora mardhanam,
Devaki paramanandam Krishnam vande Jagat Gurum ॥ 5



सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपाल नन्दनः । पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥ 4॥
Sarvaopanishadho gaavo dogdhaa Gopala Nandana,
Parthoo vathsa sudheer bhokthaa dugdam Geetamritham mahath ॥ 4 ॥

We are studying the 3rd chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, called Karmayoga. So far, we have covered 7 verses, the essence of the 7 verses is that :-

- one cannot do without action,
- because work or action, is nature or Prakriti,
- unfortunately we happen to identify ourselves with body and mind,
- and body and mind are the products of nature or Prakriti.
- and this nature consists of 3 gunas – Satwa, Rajas & Tamas.
- and it is also called energy, energy means activity. So, even for a millisecond, it is impossible for the body and mind to be without action.

So, the next question that comes is, if we cannot be without action, what is the purpose of action – to get out of the action!

What is the action ? Nature.

Somehow we have got mixed up with Prakriti, or Nature, considering Nature, or Prakriti as ourselves. In other words, we think of ourselves as body and mind.

What is spiritual progress?

To slowly but surely, gradually reduce this identity. When we start de-identifying ourselves with the body & mind, to that extent, our own true nature becomes most revealed. This is called spiritual progress – which must continue in 4 different stages :-

1.	Biological Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- This body must become a fit instrument.- That is the very first goal of any Karma.- Then we can progress intellectually.
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2.	Intellectual Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is not understanding or propounding dry theories but it is to truly understand the nature of the world, our own nature, our relation with this nature and our relationship with God. - Then we understand we are all interconnected and that is the real purpose of Karmayoga. - Then we make moral progress.
3.	Moral Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is morality? Swami Vivekananda has defined morality as identifying ourselves with everybody else and everything else. - Just as no person wishes to harm oneself, every person wishes to do only good to oneself. - Then we understand we are not the one individual body and mind, but we are the same with everything in this world, both living and non-living. - That is truly called morality! - When we come to this stage of progress, then we also progress in spirituality.
4	Spiritual Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First of all, it looks as though we have to separate ourselves from Prakriti. - However, when we reach the full knowledge of what we are, surprisingly, what we find is that :- - What we so far thought, that Prakriti, body-mind, nature are separate from us, the whole world is something different from us, and we deal with it as an object – this is our relationship at present. - Then we discover that the whole universe, the cosmos, Jagat, is nothing but my own reflection in my own mind! - It is towards this goal, of slowly moving forward, so that we understand the whole universe and me, are but one reality – then we become free.

So the Lord is slowly leading Arjuna, who is a symbol, representative of every sincere spiritual person. So far, we have discussed that Arjuna, the sādḥaka, somehow misunderstood that spiritual life is a special type of life and that he could neglect his normal duties to undertake it. Now, the Lord is telling, that whatever duties are imposed by you, because of your own Prakriti.

This is an important point, our duties are :-

- not imposed by anything outside,
- not imposed by society,
- not imposed by the scriptures,

It is only our inner nature, the state where we are, exactly decides, what are the appropriate duties so that we can move forward.

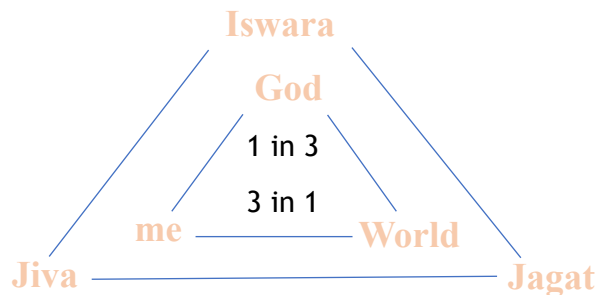
So in the 8th verse, the Lord is telling – “ Do your allotted actions, for action is superior to inaction and even the bare maintenance of your body will not be possible if you remain inactive.” So the advice is be active – but do not be active like a madcap, like a irrational person! Be active in unfolding your divinity within – whatever helps us move forward in unfolding our own inherent divinity is called our duty.

Swami Vivekananda has beautifully defined duty, using these beautiful words, Dharma and Adharma. By the way, Dharma is another word for duty. It has several other shades of meaning, this is a secondary meaning - whatever activity helps us to unfold our divinity. In other words, whichever activity helps us to move forward to God – that is called Dharma and the opposite is called Adharma. Here, Bhagavan Krishna, the Supreme Teacher that He was, He brings about a beautiful idea in this particular chapter, which is called Karmayoga.

The essence of this 3rd chapter called Karmayoga is, to deposit the beautiful marvellous idea that this whole universe is interconnected. In every religion, we find that this idea of God, me and the world. We are one, we are interconnected; but we happen to be in a state of ignorance.

How do we understand and accept this interconnectedness?

That I, you and God are non-separate? We are but 1 in 3, 3 in 1. Sri Ramanuja gives a beautiful explanation of it – he says Jiva, Jagat & Ishwara.



The whole life can be divided into here is God, here is the world and here am I. We are totally related. To understand this relatedness and to abide in this relatedness as One – that is the goal of life, also called *moksha*, or liberation.

For example, in every religion, let me quote Judaism, there is the idea of sacrifice. The idea is, we give something to the Divine, then whatever remains is ours. When we hear this kind of statement, we should not think we have anything separately other than what God has given us. The idea of sacrifice, the beautiful Sanskrit word for it called *yagna*, (*yag* – the root from which this word is derived) means worship. To worship means to understand the relationship between God

and me. The idea is, whatever we are, whatever we are able to offer to God, is nothing but what God, the Divine, has already given us.

So, live a life by offering to God, a little bit of what God has given us, back to Him, not that He needs it, but to show our love, our gratitude and our relatedness! Then whatever remains after offering to God, that is called *prasada*, and with that we have to live our life joyfully.

This idea is also made so explicit in the Isavasya Upanishad, 1st mantra :-

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥

īśāvāsyamidam sarvaṃ yatkiñca jagatyāṃ jagat |
tena tyaktena bhujñithā mā ḡrdhaḥ kasyasvidghanam ||

This what we have been speaking of for so long – this whole universe, whatever we see, whatever we experience, including experiencing our own body and mind is nothing but God with a name, with a form and with qualities. If we can have that idea, then that is called *yagna*. So the physiological expression of *yagna* such as worship or offering something in the fire is a very external, limited, crude idea of *yagna*. The real *yagna* is how we feel our oneness with God.

In Christianity, when you attend Mass, everything is offered to God and then God gives us *prasada* in the form of bread (symbolising God's flesh) and wine (symbolising God's blood). The idea should not be taken in a crude way – it means everything is my expression. In Hinduism, this is called *Bali* बली – we offer living beings like a goat or a buffalo, or most often it is a coconut, fruits, flowers, water, leaves etc. **Recording 15 minutes**

The idea is to find our oneness with the entire universe and connect it with God, that the whole world, including me, me as a part of the world, is nothing but that same Brahman, that same reality with a name and form.

So, do not forget, that we are all interconnected!

That concept of interconnectedness is the central theme of this chapter. Now, slowly, we have to extend this idea of interconnectedness to the whole of life and to the whole universe. If we can do that, then we are connected with humanity, with living and non living objects.

Even though I have repeated this very often, I again want to repeat this :-

- Hinduism deifies everything. A river is not a body of water but a Devata – an expression of God's power!

- A mountain is also a lifeless piece of stone, but God Himself is manifest in that form.

All these examples serve to make us aware of our own divinity and the divinity of the entire universe :-

सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म [Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma]
(everything is nothing but God).

ईशा वास्यमिदं सर्वं [isHâ vâsyamidaM sarvaM]
(see the whole universe as the Divine).

Scientists now have also come round to this beautiful concept and they term it as 'holistic' – the whole universe is completely interconnected. The destruction of even the most insignificant thing in this world will only damage us, as we are slowly discovering to our great pain and suffering.

So the purpose of Karmayoga is to make life meaningful, to make life one of fulfilment and of the greatest joy. If I have to rephrase the purpose of Karmayoga, or in fact of any yoga, let it be Bhakti yoga, Raja yoga or Jnana yoga, is to realise that we are God in the form of "I am Sat, I am Chit, I am Ananda!"

So, the Lord is telling now [Ch. 3.9] :-

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः |
तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥ ९॥

*yajñārthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra loko 'yaṁ karma-bandhanaḥ
tad-arthaṁ karma kaunteya mukta-saṅgaḥ samāchara*

"The world is bound by action, other than those performed for the sake of sacrifice. Therefore, O Arjuna, perform actions for that sake, for *yagna* alone, and become free from all attachments."

This verse tells us, a few wonderful ideas.

First of all :-

- work by itself has no meaning,
- every action has only one purpose, and
- if it is not done in the proper way, it will bind us.

By itself, by its very nature, work is neither binding nor liberating, but by the attitude we bear upon this action, spiritual attitude, that is what is really called Karmayoga and that is what Sri Ramakrishna expresses as **Shiva Jnane Jiva**

Seva [serve man looking upon him as God]. But I think we can extend that idea and say, not only we have to serve God, but we have to serve human beings, we have to serve nature, we have to serve the river, we have to serve the mountains, we have to serve the forests and plants, insects, birds – everything living and non-living we can serve.

How can we do that?

I'll come to that point slightly later on.

Now, what did we understand? Any action, without adopting a spiritual attitude, will only bind us more and more. To put it another way, any action that is done solely for the purpose of selfishness, selfish enjoyment, is binding. By contrast, every action that is done, without the idea of selfishness, liberates us.

So, perform all actions in the spirit of Karmayoga, or what Sri Ramakrishna calls, **Shiva Jnane Jagat Seva**. As I mentioned already, let us try and look upon every bird or animal as God. That is why we have various birds and animals associated with Deities - birds with Lakshmi & Saraswati, tigers, lions, peacocks even rats. The idea is not a crude, undeveloped uncultured one, but slowly to see the world as it is, but not as we are apt to see now.

So every action that does not bring about bondage upon the doer is called Karmayoga. It is only unintelligent activities that thicken impression in the mind and bring bondage.

The next verse tell us [Ch. 3.10] :-

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥ 10॥

saha-yajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛiṣṭvā purovācha prajāpatiḥ
anena prasaviṣhyadhvam eṣha vo 'stviṣṭa-kāma-dhuk

The meaning is, that the *Prajapati*, the creator of the universe (also called Brahma in the Puranas), having in the beginning of creation, created mankind, together with duties and said, “ By this, shall you prosper. Let this be the milch cow of your desires” – Kamadhenu – the mythological cow that yields all desires and objects.

The Creator, having created this world, as if He also said, He created *yagna*. *Yagna* is not just a fire ritual, *yagna* is a way of looking upon life and living the life – that is called *yagna*.

The Creator said, “ O Yagna, O spiritual attitude, may You be a great blessing to all these beings! This will be able to live to their best because of You!”

It is as if, *Prajapati*, the Creator knew, that if I do not show the proper way, then people are not going to be put on the right path. To put it in modern language, whenever we buy any gadget, the manufacturer also sends a manual. If we do not read the manual, then we will have to learn our lesson after wasting a lot of time. So, the Creator has given a beautiful manual, of how to live life – that goes by the name of *yagna*.

“O *yagna*, if people follow You, You bring great blessings to all these beings!”
How many blessings – 1, 2? No – infinite blessings! All the blessings in the world are divided into 4 blessings – the 4 supreme goals of life :-

1. Dharma
2. Artha
3. Kama
4. Moksha

अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष [*anena prasaviṣhyadhvam*]

“May we live life according to Your manual and may You yield the very best things”.

When a man is living according to your directions, then he will be getting in this world, the result of adopting that spiritual attitude, that he will be dharmic, he will be a righteous person, he will be a rational person, he will be an intelligent person and he leads a life of fulfilment. But the ultimate best fruit of life if a person lives like this, is that he will become totally liberated, even while living, which is called *moksha*.

Five great sacrifices of Hinduism

Now, we are going to talk about the 5 great sacrifices, because we are talking about *yagna*. It is said in the Hindu scriptures, that the human life, by its very birth, is the fulfilment of 5 great sacrifices, let us interpret them again.

For those who have not heard, and for those who have heard but forgotten, and for even those who remember but do not have a clear attitude, we are, by our very birth, indebted to the rishis, to our ancestors, to the Gods & Goddesses, to all human beings who are living on this earth, and to all of nature – birds, animals, insects, flowers, trees, forests, and even rivers, mountains etc – the very earth, to everything we are indebted. So, we should lead such a life, that we slowly get rid of our indebtedness. And what happens? If we really try to get rid of our debts, in the process, all of them – even if they take 1% from us or we offer 1% to them, they will give us 100% results in the form of happiness on this earth as well as happiness elsewhere.

So, we are indebted to all the powers of nature.

Many of us do not know, that behind the whole of this marvellous nature is nothing but a manifestation of God in the form of these powers. Perhaps, we can guess by referring to global warming, El Niño etc. Nowadays we are all aware, we ourselves damage the entire nature, for example the ozone layer is becoming more troublesome to us, and as a result, global warming and unexpected climate changes are taking place. All these, the scientists do not attribute to disrespecting the Gods but Hinduism says it is because of not living the life we are supposed to live.

We are indebted to all those who have come before us, especially our own ancestors.

Let me cover these points after this, one by one.

1) *Rishi Yjana* ऋषि यज्ञः

Rishis mean, givers of knowledge. Today, we are living in this world, so happily, so much free from pain etc, because thousands and thousands of people have sacrificed their lives to discover the scientific laws of nature. The end result of these discoveries is helping all of us to live healthy, happy lives. To put it succinctly, biological and well as psychological knowledge is helping us to live a life of fulfilment and meaning.

So, we have to get rid of their debts. How do we do that? Either we must develop some knowledge, or whatever knowledge we have, we must give back to the world. If we not give and only receive, then death will be ours, stagnation will be ours, unhappiness will be ours. Our only way out is – the more we empty ourselves, the more we will be in a position to receive.

So, by respecting these great people, the givers of knowledge, or by helping other people to develop knowledge, and by looking after these people who are giving us this knowledge, that is the true worship of the Rishis.

That is how get rid of the first of the five debts, to the Rishis, or givers of knowledge.

2) *Dev-Yjana* देव यज्ञः

Then we are also indebted to the most wonderful things. Scientists of course, do not accept there are any divine beings but Hinduism and other religions too, all accept that the different powers of nature that we see – the space, fire, the air, the water, the earth – they are not just lifeless manifestations of the world, but divinity in that form.

We are born from these 5 elements, we are sustained by these five elements (*space, air, water, fire & earth*) and we go back to these five elements.

As *Tattriyaupanishad* तैत्तिरीयोपनिषद् beautifully puts in the third Valli (*Brigu-Valli* भृगुवल्ली) that God alone has become these five elements, for serving us, so that we can lead a happy life. By definition, happy life means a spiritual life, whereby we slowly progress and re-capture our forgotten divinity.

That is called worshipping Gods - how do we do that? Answer is,

Develop reverence for these five elements

As I said "Let us respect the space, the air, the fire, the water and the earth."

Let us take whatever is needed and let us pay back again that means keep the earth pure, keep the water pure, keep the fire also pure, keep the air pure and keep also the space pure.

Unfortunately, we are polluting the whole lot. Just like the foolish fellow who sits on the branch of a tree and cuts that branch, not realising that along with the destruction of the branch, he is going to be destroyed (*as well*). This is called (*Dev-yjana* देव यज्ञ *or*) *Dev-ridhaa* देव-ऋणा.

3) *Nar-Yajna* नर यज्ञः

We are also indebted (to all human beings). Every human being on this earth is doing some sort of service to everybody else. As Shri Ramakrishna said "To look upon everybody with respect, with reverence and with honour."

This quality is called humility - to render any service (whatever) we can in a spirit of love and respect. This is the way that we can get rid of debt of all human beings.

This is called *Nar-Yajna* नर यज्ञ or serving human beings.

4) *Bhuta-Yjana* भूत यज्ञः

Next comes, *Bhuta* भूत means everything other than human beings - the rivers, the mountains, the trees, the plants, insects etc. Now, we are slowly realising that the whole universe is inter-connected and any damage done wilfully or otherwise to any part of the universe, is just like harming to our own parts of the body and this will bring about our own destruction.

Swami Vivekananda on Vedanta and its application to life:

On this subject Swami Vivekananda says in his lecture "Vedanta and its application to Indian life" delivered in Madras. I quote:

"Our Upanishads say that the cause of all misery is ignorance and that is perfectly true, when apply to every state of life either social or spiritual, it is our

ignorance that make us hate each other. It is through ignorance that we do not know and we do not love each other. God projected the world out of Himself - first the cosmos, then the starry heaven, and then all living organism, and eventually the human species by unfold."

What does Swami Vivekananda want us to understand?

Everything comes from that 'One' and then goes back into that 'One' alone, the whole universe will go back eventually. If human beings or a society of human beings does not realise, does not recognise, does not allow this principle of inter-connectedness, then they will suffer.

A society is strong if the yajna principal, inter-connectedness and service inspires people in society. That society is sane, that society is strong, that society is moral and that society is ultimately spiritual.

If that idea of giving and taking doesn't occur then that is called death.

Frogs in a well

Curiously, Swami Vivekananda compared the Hindu society to 'Frogs in a well'.

"They (Hindus) have tremendous treasures, not earthly treasures, but spiritual treasures, in the form of the most beautiful philosophies and also spiritual teachings. We have closed our society to everybody, and that is why, I say, the divine Mother in the guise of the foreign forces, broke this wall and liberated Hindus as it were."

Explanation: This is a totally different subject. But, the essence of this is that if we do not voluntarily take as well as give or (in other words) only remain as takers and receivers but not givers then a divine ordinance will come in the form of some strong force to fix it and this (*strong force*) will make us suffer until we realise again (*and learn*) the right way to live.

Even today, I wonder, how many of us have truly realised this.

Recording time 33 minutes

Day and night, God in the form of these five elements, is serving the whole universe.

"So, even when the creator, creator means Virat or Ishwar or God puts up the show of the universe of five elements and brings forth living as well as non-living, along with men on the stage of life to work, to strive and to itch you. He creates also the manual called "Yajna". This means, how to live life with the spirit of self-dedicated activities."

"Now, open your eyes, the yajna spirit is seen everywhere, the sun shines, the moon appears, the sea throbs, earth bears, all in a spirit of sacrifice. Day and night this God, in the form of these five elements, is serving the whole universe."

Universal vision of Guru Nanak Dev

I recollect a beautiful incidence in the life of Guru Nanak Dev.

He was a wondering monk and he was looking very odd and peculiar. One evening, he wanted to enter into a temple to attend a vesper service, but the priest looking at him, did not allow him (*to enter*) inside, he walked out, looked up, saw the beautiful stars and burst forth into a most marvellous song.
(A full version of this beautiful prayer of Guru Nanak-Dev is as below)

Prayer of "Virat" by Gurunanak-Dev

गगन में थाल, रवि चंद्र दीपक बने, तारका मंडल जनक मोती।
धूपु मलआनलो, पवण चवरो करे, सगल बनराइ फुलन्त जोति॥
कैसी आरती होइ॥ भवखंडना तेरी आरती॥ अनहत सबद बाजंत भेरी॥

Gagan mein thaal, rav chand deepak bane, taarka mandal janak moti dhoop
malay aan lao,
pawan chavro kare sagal ban raai phulant jyoti kaisi aarti hoye, bhavkhandana
teri aarti.
anhat sabad bajant bheri kaisi aarti hoye, bhavkhandana teri aarti.

Meaning: The whole sky is the earthly prayer-platter. The sun, the moon and the stars are the lamps.

Beautiful rivers and the springs; all these waters are the offerings (of nature) to the Lord just as we do at the vesper service.

Beautiful breeze is the *vayu-devata* or the god of *pranavayu* / oxygen. He (*Vayudevata*) is fanning continuously for 24 hours.

All these beautiful trees are giving their flowers, their fruits and everything in the worship of the *Virat or the Universal God.....(so beautiful)*

Thus, God is serving the world because He is the world and so also He is serving Himself.

Just out of our ignorance, we do not acknowledge that.

This acknowledgement of the true nature of the world, of which we are also a part, is called Yajna.

The whole world, the cosmic powers and nature's phenomena, all these functions instinctively and offer their services all through inter-connectedness.

So, What is the advice (for us)?

Let us also join this inter-connectedness. Our Hindu religion had found out the beautiful concept of this inter-connectedness and this is called "The law of inter-connectedness or the law of harmony" called *ritthum ऋतम्*.

This idea of *rhithum* ऋतम् or law of harmony means everything is in perfect harmony with everything else and that is why this whole universe is the "Song of Joy". If we also join this law of *rhithum* ऋतम् means by living a life of sacrifice as advised by every scripture of every religion, we will be able to become harmonious with the entire universe. Then, we will be happy, we will be fulfilled, life will become meaningful and we will be ultimately liberated.

The next three verses tell us:

Chapter 3 / Verse 11

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः | परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ || 11||
devān bhāvayatānena te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ
parasparam bhāvayantaḥ śhreyaḥ param avāpsyatha

Meaning: Cherish the gods with this idea of yajna, worship them and may these devas in turn cherish you. Thus, cherishing one-another, you shall gain the highest inter-dependence and then this is the way to progress...not by isolation...not by confrontation...not by exploitation but by harmonious cherishing of each other.

What is meant by Ecological disaster?

More than at any time in history, we have to adopt this idea of harmony, not only for the sake of peace or happiness but perhaps even for the sake of living a very ordinary life.

Natural resources can be used but they must be replenished also. If we don't replenish it, we will be in trouble and that is called "Ecological disaster".

Concept of Chachrum चक्रम्

Just like, when we see a seed, then we also see a sprout, a plant, a flower, a fruit, and again back to the seed. This beautiful harmonious cycle is called *rhithum* ऋतम्.

In the Bhagavat Gita, this concept is called "*Chachrum* चक्रम्".

Chachrum चक्रम् means a wheel. So, this wheel, for example solar energy, coming down to the earth, becoming plants, natural energies, animals and human beings and then this energy again goes back to the same sun. In this way there is a constant *rhithum* ऋतम्.

एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः |अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति || C3 /16||

*evam pravartitam chakram nānuvartayatiha yaḥ
aghāyur indriyārāmo mogham pārtha sa jīvati*

एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं *evam pravartitam chakram*: This is what we have to discover in our life. We cannot isolate ourselves. This is a cosmic principal according to Bhagavat Gita and it is called ऋतम् *rhittum*. *Rhittum* in practice is called satyam or truth and this truth in practice is called dharma, and this dharma produces karma. So, if we lead a dharmic life or a righteous life then this very righteous life will take us to God by slowly unfolding our divinity.

Rhittum = Satyam = Truth = Dharma = Dharmic life = Unfolding of divinity

But, when we are concerned with, not only our own country but with other countries as well, or not only with our district or our state but with other states as well or not only with this earth but with the entire cosmos as far as we can see then that becomes a true yajna.

It is a cosmic principal. **Recording time 40.35.**

Modern science has now recognised this as inter-relatedness of things.

Law of Seva or Law of service as propounded by Swamiji

So, how we do that yajna?

Here, comes the **Law of Seva** as propounded by Swami Vivekananda.

"The law of service is faithfully followed by every sentient or insentient member of the cosmos instinctively. Man alone is given the freedom to act as he likes unto the extent, it disobeys the universal law of the sacrifice / yajna to that extent he comes to suffer because he with his arrogant and egotistic actions brings, discarded the harmony of existence around him."

Here is a beautiful idea. I would like to explore for a short time.

Man has been given freedom. But, other than man, animals follow their nature (*animals do not have the same freedom which human beings have*). The plants, the rivers, the mountains, the sun, the moon, the stars, everything in this universe is following the law of *rhittum*. The sun rises, it shines then it sets and again it comes back the same, so also the moon etc.

Universe is nothing but a manifestation of God with name and form.

But, it (*rhittum*) is not merely a lifeless activity, in that process, the whole universe is created, it is sustained and is taken back into its cosmic elements. So, this concept of understanding the nature of this universe that we are the part of this universe and universe is nothing but the manifestation of God with name and form, and that is called yajna.

Yajna is that spiritual prayer of leading a life which will increasingly bring an understanding of inter-connectedness.

How are we connected?

(We are connected) not only with our body and mind but also with the whole universe. And, with this *(realisation)* we will attain liberation which means, we realise our true spiritual nature and there will be no more bondage for us.

The Bhagavat Gita is also telling that when human beings follow this beautiful law of rittum through the appropriate action called yajna then gods are pleased.

Are Gods and Goddesses real?

Do not think that there are not 'beings' like gods and goddesses. There are people who would say that there are no different gods or goddesses, it is an old superstition. But, I want to deviate here a little bit before going on.

Those who have read the life of Shri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swamiji (Vivekananda), Brahmanandaji etc. There are several facts which will come to the fore.

First of all, Shri Ramakrishna, Shri Ramakrishna's mother, Shri Ramakrishna's father, Swamiji (Vivekananda), direct disciples, Holy Mother, every one of them has seen what we call 'Invisible beings or Gods and Goddesses' I do not want to mention many incidences but would like to mention one particular incidence.

Incidence from the life of Shri Ramakrishna

When, Shri Ramakrishna was in the womb of his mother. His mother *Chandramani Devi* suddenly saw a god riding on a swan. This god looked a bit tired. At that time, Lord of the universe (*Shri Ramakrishna*) was in her womb, she felt that everybody in this universe is her own child. She became as if she was a 'Universal-Mother'.

Addressing this god riding on a swan, she smilingly said "O' God riding this swan, you look very tired my child, come and have '*Pantha Bhaat* पंथा भात' and your tiredness will go away". (*Pantha Bhaat is- rice soaked in water for overnight, which is very cooling.*) God laughed and went away.

These kinds of incidences are innumerable, I have only mentioned one.

Now, a question may come in our minds.

Was Chandramani Devi hallucinating? or Was she deluding herself? or Was it a fact?

We are foolish, we are stupid if we do not understand that there are many things for which we have not even an inclination (*or any idea*) at all. So, we have to trust the scriptures.

Who is a thief?

Now, scriptures are telling us that devas nourished by the sacrifice, will give us the desired objects. Indeed, he who enjoys objects, or anything given by the devas or gods, without offering them in return with gratitude, he is verily a thief.

Chapter 3 Verse 12

इष्टान्भोगान् हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः । तैर्दत्तान्प्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥ 12॥
iṣṭān bhogān hi vo devā dāsyante yajña-bhāvitāḥ
tair dattān apradāyaibhyo yo bhun̄kte stena eva saḥ

What is meant by true yajna?

Here, again we have to remind ourselves that yajna in the past was considered as a 'fire ritual'.

It is a kind of religious ritual. But, we have to expand this idea and say "fire ritual" or puja which followers of various religions perform either in their temples or in their churches or in their mosques, sine bogs etc. are also fine and are an expression of this yajna.

But much more than this, it is to understand that our inter-connectedness, inter-relatedness as a part of the divinity and that is true yajna.

If these rituals help us to get the understanding (of inter-connectedness), then that is the proper way of performing rituals. However, even if somebody does it mentally, with a moral or a spiritual attitude, without bothering to do any external activities etc, he will also reach the same goal. **Recording 47 minutes.**

Why we should worship gods and goddesses?

By worshipping gods, we acquire the capacity to receive. One question which may come to our mind: why should we worship them (gods)? Will they not give to us even if we do not worship them? They are prepared to give, but the ability to receive, what they are prepared to give us, is only possible if we follow the instructions given to us by the scriptures.

Modern thieves of technologically advanced world.

Revered Swami Ranganathanandaji says "Most of the people of modern technologically advanced civilisation are thieves, from that (*Vedantic*) point of view".

For example, downloading videos, music, books and so many other things without paying anything back is called thievery.

So, most people think that because there is technology available by which we can get them (*music, videos, books etc*) without paying, then it is completely free but they do not understand that there is no free lunch in this world. Even if we do not pay now but we will be forced to pay a heavy price much later on in a different form.

Just to give you an example. A person who does all these illegal activities and he thinks that he is very clever. But, one day whatever he has accumulated, he might suffer with severe losses and might lose it all.

He can not connect that this loss is directly proportional to all that he had already availed off without paying anything. He would definitely have to pay back either in the form of physical suffering or in the form of mental suffering. It will definitely come.

Modern ecological awareness:

Now, all over the world, wise people, philosophers, scientists are recognising these valuable facts that we have to give (*to our natural environment*) and then only we will develop the ability to receive. That is why now, there are environmental programmes like forestation, cleaning of rivers and pollution, planting up the tress etc. All this is going on and that is a grand scheme. Now, we have started giving back to our nature, something which we have increasingly destroyed. We can only enjoy nature's gifts, when we give back (*with respect*).

Post-hunting spiritual ceremony of African tribes:

I am reminded of a beautiful incidence.

In Africa sometime ago, people used to live by hunting. Some of these tribes used to do a very beautiful ceremony (*after hunting*).

When a tribal human being used to succeed in killing an animal after chasing. Then, he would kneel down in reverence, would take a handful of dust and would sprinkle this dust on the dead body of this hunted animal and used to pray "O' spirit, (for them every living thing is a spirit) I have to sacrifice you for my own life. May God bless you. May you have a better after life."

Sometimes, this type of killing is a necessary act for survival. If we develop reverence and pray honestly then we are following the right way of life. But, if any human being does not follow the right (*scriptural*) way then he becomes a thief with respect to the environment and a thief will be punished.

That is what Lord is telling (in the next verse).

Two types of people in the society:

1) Selfish people:

There are people, who are selfish, they want to enjoy themselves without giving anything back, they are only eating sin. Sin means they will be suffering, mentally, physically, morally, intellectually, and spiritually. But, the world now seems to be full of these so called people, who only want to steal, other people's hard earned money etc by creating certain programmes. These people do not understand that they will be punished. According to Hinduism, they will be born as blind, deaf, poor, poppers, tramps etc or disabled, mentally retarded etc, and they suffer.

2) Unselfish godly people or good people:

But, we should not think that everybody is such a thief. There are also divine men and women. How many? Many many are there, the godly people, the good people, living on the remnants of yajna, are freed from all sins.

What does it mean? These people on the other hand are rendering the best service, they can do to society, whether society recognises it or not. After rendering their services, they eat the *Prasada* or what is also called यज्ञ अवशिष्टा *yajna-avashishta* means whatever remains after yjana (*means after rendering their services*). These people are called godly people, good people.

In Hinduism whatever is left out after offering to God is called prasada. This prasada purifies us physically, morally, mentally, intellectually, and also spiritually.

Then an important subject comes (*in the mind and that is*):

Do not evade your social and country taxes.

There are so many people who want to evade taxes. Some people evade taxes directly, some people employ big companies and they take the advantage by moving their assets to those countries, who do not impose any taxes (tax-free countries) or they employ clever accountants who through the law...by-pass the law.

Even in social context, when you earn, you should pay your taxes and whatever remains after paying taxes is your wealth to enjoy. But, if you avoid paying taxes through all sorts of tricks then you suffer, society suffers, everybody suffers. We pay taxes to make a stable society.

I would like to substitute this tax word with another phrase "service with reverence". This is what we pay for making a stable society. When society is stable, pure and harmonious then as a member of that society, I will also become blessed, filled with joy and most important is, I will progress in spiritual life.

This again, reminds me of the first mantra of Ishavashaya Upanishad.

ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् । तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥

īśāvāsyamidam sarvaṃ yatkiñca jagatyāṃ jagat |
tena tyaktena bhujñīthā mā gṛdhaḥ kasyasviddhanam ||

(1st Mantra, Isha-Upanishad)

Summary of today's discussion;

So, the sum and substance of today's discussion is as follows:

- God and goddesses created this universe.
- This consists of gods and goddesses which we call nature, human beings, living creatures, the earth, the rivers etc.
- It is all one integrated harmonious whole and,
- If we want to be really happy, fulfilled and want to live a meaningful life, then we have to follow this beautiful law of harmony called rihitum.
- Expressed in yajna, the concept of sacrifice that means, we are grateful and we offer our gratefulness.
- And, we also share what we have with others, especially those, who do not have, If necessary, we also take, what we cannot have from other people.
- This concept of inter-relatedness, inter-connectedness means that we are all one integral part of the divine. Who consists of this jiva, jagat, and Ishwara. That is the sum and substance of yajna.
- He who enjoys objects given by the gods, without offering his own yajna, then that person is called a sinner, a thief, स्तेनः *stenah* means thief.

Chapter 3 Verse 13

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।
भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥ 13॥

*yajña-śhiṣṭāśhinaḥ santo muchyante sarva-kilbiṣhaiḥ
bhuñjate te tvaghaṁ pāpā ye pachantyātma-kāraṇāt*

Meaning: The righteous people, on the other hand are those who eat the remnants of the sacrifice, they are freed from all sins, (Let us remember, sin means suffering, virtue means happiness.) But, those sinful ones who cook food only for their own sake verily eat but sin.

Two categories of human beings:

The Lord Krishna is dividing all human beings into two categories.

- 1) Those who receive but never give. and
- 2) Those who will give as well as receive. They are grateful in every way. So, by that kind of life they become blessed.

What about the other people 'the simple people!'.

Escalator called "Evolution"

Those who are selfish, arrogant and self-constricted, they will also be forced to turn into righteous people, because nature will not allow us to keep quiet. We are all, as I mentioned in the past, standing on an escalator called 'Evolution' and if we can help ourselves, not stand by, but by moving a little bit then our progress will be faster.

But, nature will take us anyway to our own home which is God but in this process we may have to undergo a lot of suffering.

Essence of verses 10-13

So in these four verses, what Lord is trying to tell, I will summarise this for you.

- 1) The whole universe is one.
- 2) It is a manifestation of divinity.
- 3) We are all one integral whole (entity) in God.
- 4) This world can be divided as jiva (the living), jagat - the world with which we interact, living and non-living as well, we are the expression of God / Bhagwan.
- 5) So, as I have mentioned, at the time of creation, Lord created us and gave us the manual called Vedas. These Vedas advocate us that we have to practice this yajna or spirit of service. which means "You take (*from the world*) gratefully and gratefully you give back whatever you have received. Whatever you have from others, give it to them back." This is called परस्परं भावयन्तः *parasparam bhāvayantaḥ*. Ultimately, this is called living a life of dharma, living a righteous life and it fulfils the law of harmony. When we really try and strive our level best to lead this kind of life then we will be blessed and earth will be blessed. We will also help other people, to grasp this idea and move

forward (in their life) and ultimately we are going to reclaim our forgotten divine nature. Ultimately we will fully manifest our divinity..... **Aham Brahmasmi** अहं ब्रह्मास्मि.

Class ends with chanting. To be cont'd..

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

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम् । देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥
Om Shanti Shanti Shanti Om

With kind regards.
Hari Sundaresan & Mamta Misra

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