

Swami Dayatmananda on Bhagavad Gita Class 61 date 06/07/19

(Lecture is delivered online from Bagaluru 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 ॥

मूकं करोति वाचालं पङ्गुं लङ्घयते गिरिम् यत्कृपा तमहं वन्दे परमानन्द माधवम् ॥ 8 ॥

Mookam karothi vaachaalam, pankhum lankayathe girim,
Yath krupa thaham vandhe Paramananda madhavam

We have just completed the first three chapters of the Bhagavat Gita.

In our last class I completed the third chapter. Let us just recall the essence of the third chapter of the Bhagavat Gita called karma-yoga.

Essence of the Third Chapter of the Bhagavat Gita called Karma-Yoga:-

- **Why third chapter is called as Karma-Yoga?** It is titled as Karma-Yoga because it is teaching us - how to convert our karma into a yoga or yagna or a sacrifice.
- **Arjuna's confusion:** The chapter starts with Arjuna's doubt. In the second chapter the Lord was advocating to Arjuna that ultimate goal of human being is to get Self knowledge. He also seems to advocate the superiority of the jyana-yoga / path of knowledge and immediately afterward He was also telling now you practice karma-yoga. So Arjuna had a natural doubt - You (Lord Krishna) advocated first jyana-yoga and you said that this is the goal of life. Now, you are advising me to practice karma-yoga. Please tell me clearly as I am a bit confused - which yoga is most suitable or superior.
- **All paths lead to Self-Knowledge:** In answer to that the Lord is ascertaining that it is only the ignorant people who make such a distinction that one path is superior to the other path. Here, once more the Lord is highlighting the important teaching of Hinduism that one can reach the goal of Self realisation / Atma-jyana / God realisation through any particular path.
- **Teachings of Shri Ramakrishna:** In this age Shri Ramakrishna had come down to again re-highlight that religions need not quarrel even non-religions also for example science, service etc. Through them also one can reach God - through religions, through science, through art etc sincerely persuade - any path will take us to God.
- **Total surrender to God:** So the Lord is telling that wise know that practised sincerely and with a complete idea of surrender to the Lord every path is capable of taking us to the same goal which is *Atmajyana* or Self realisation.
- **Suitability of karma-yoga:** But, then there are some preparations need to be made and karma-yoga is for those people who have a particular tendency such as



restlessness and very happy to perform actions - for such people the path of karma is very necessary.

- **Convert every action into selfless action:** So, the Lord extols the path of selfless action and how to convert every action into an effective spiritual sadhana. Then, the Lord advises Arjuna that he should convert every action of his into a selfless sacrificing action which in the end leads to Self realisation. This advice is not meant only for Arjuna but through Arjuna to each and every Sadhaka who was present not only at the time of Arjuna and Krishna but even today and even in future that is a truth which abides for ever.
- **Life is a dharma-shetra & a battlefield:** The next idea that we get in the third chapter is that this whole world is an effective spiritual field. In fact Bhagavat Gita starts with the most wonderful idea. What is the idea? The whole world, the whole life is a *dharma-shetra* but it is also a field of battle - battle between the lower tendencies and the higher tendencies, between the good and evil, between the spiritual and the non-spiritual. Without fighting in this battle, without trying to subdue to convert our lower tendencies into higher tendencies and this world gives us a marvellous opportunity to do this like a gymnasium to develop our intellectual, moral and spiritual muscles. It is not possible to progress in spiritual life. So, through this field of the world by encountering our obstacles, by practicing the right action in a spirit of service dedicated to the Lord - man progresses to the higher and higher state of consciousness. And the,
- **Atmarati:** Next idea that we get is that a man might have reached the state of God realisation. He goes beyond all three *gunas* and as a result he need not do anything at all. All he needs to do is to abide in his own-self. This is what Shri Ramakrishna's very effective parable tries to convey that teaching to us.
- **Parable of a pregnant mother by Shri Ramakrishna:** There was a married girl living in a family. She became pregnant. As the foetus is growing in her womb, the mother-in-law reduces her work less and less. When baby is born, all that she needs to do is to take care of this baby. Until that time, the mother-in-law gives her tremendous amount of work to do.
Analogy here is - This world is the mother-in-law. Life is the mother-in-law until we develop devotion to God. Until this devotion matures, we will be given a lot of duties, not for anybody's satisfaction but for our own good and for our own growth. But, as our devotion develops and when we finally have God realisation then our only duty is to be ***Atmarati*** आत्मरति means completely absorbed in our own-self.
- **Imitation tendency:** But, even for such (*Atmarati*) people, the Lord advises that they are advised to lead a normal life like anybody else discharging all their duties according to the directions of the scriptures. Why? Because many people in this world even spiritual aspirants have a tendency called **imitation tendency**. Whatever we see in this world great people are performing, we have a tendency to imitate them. Even worldly people imitate bigger worldly people, famous people, rich people, celebrities etc. So we also need some guidance. If great people enjoy their own realisation but do not show it in their day to day life then we are likely to be mislead because we don't know what is inside their hearts but we only perceive what they are doing in their day to day life before our eyes. So the idea is that even a wise man should act so that he will be an ideal to other ignorant people otherwise not only that he will be not of any help but positively he will be an hindrance by setting a bad example to people.

- **Guaranteed way of spiritual progress by karma-yoga:** Shri Krishna also points out that many many spiritual aspirants following this yoga of karma 'Karma-Yoga' they may be kings or they may be great scientists or they may be administrators or they may be extremely busy business people, whatever they are, many people by developing this attitude of karma-yoga that is associating each one of their activity to the Lord. These people will also attain perfection therefore O'Arjuna you also follow this ancient guaranteed way of spiritual progress called karma-yoga.
- **Bhagavat Lila भगवत् लीला:** Then, the Lord sights His own example "I am the creator, sustainer and destroyer of this universe. Even though I am seen to be doing all these things but I do not feel that I am the doer nor and I do not feel that I am the enjoyer. The Lord is telling us that you imitate Me because all these so called activities of mind are not born out of the necessity. They are just my playfulness and it is called Bhagavat Lila. So "O'Man your life is also a lila. You may not realise it now but you would realise it later on.
- **Dream & waking state:** Vedantic teachers give us this example of dream. When we go to bed and experience a nice dream then it all seems extraordinarily real. When we wake up then two things happen. First we realise that it is not real but it is only our imagination. Secondly no one else has created any happiness or unhappiness to us or to others. In our dream we ourselves have assumed the whole dream world. We ourselves are our own friends, as well we ourselves are our own greatest enemy. It is like a huge cinema or drama. But, the only problem is when we come back to the waking state then we feel that was the dream and that was unreal however this waking state is absolutely real. So unless we wake up from this 'dream' called waking state to another state called Self realisation or state of *Turiya* until then we will not be able to be convinced that this waking state is equally unreal though appearance is there but unreal like the dream.
- **God's dream / God's Lila:** So, the Lord is telling that through my Lila / divine playfulness - I create, I sustain and I destroy. I never become burden with that I am the doer or I am the experiencer or I am the enjoyer or I am the sufferer. What applies to the Lord also equally applies to each one of us in our day to day life. How can it be so? - Because God is God. Where as we are only bound limited imperfect souls. The answer is - it is this whole world including all of us are only God's Lila / God's dream. This is a beautiful analogy. God also dreams playfully, wilfully and with complete self awareness. This is the distinction (between us and God). When we are dreaming we forget that we are dreaming. When God dreams then He pretends to be forgetful but He is completely aware. That is why He controls, He helps, even in His Own dream.
- **Each soul is potentially divine:** If we can understand the Lord in this way then we can also understand our life also in the same way. We are none other than divine children. That is why Swami Vivekananda said " Each soul is potentially divine." Man become egotistic thinking that he is the doer and enjoyer. But, in fact it is the nature called in Vedanta as *prakruti* that does everything. If we can also distinguish between our true self and the activities of the nature, by nature we mean whatever is done through the body and the mind. In fact this whole world is nothing but experiences gained through the body and mind. If we can forget our body and mind then this world / prakruti completely vanishes. For example in deep sleep we get cut off from our identity with our body and mind therefore there is no world therefore, there is no need of solution therefore we are at great peace and happiness. We have to do that not unconsciously but with full consciousness and for that spiritual effort or sadhana is very much needed.

- **Prakruti / divine nature / divine maya:** So if we can get rid of the feeling that I am not the doer but prakruti is the doer. I am not the enjoyer but it is the prakruti. Prakruti means the divine nature / divine maya / avidhaya / ignorance etc. So, it is this which does everything but it does it only with the help of our self awareness. In the presence of light man does many things but the light does not even know - one man is reading a holy scripture and another man is forging a false cheque. The light is merely a un-participating witness. If we can develop this understanding slowly then we will also enjoy that blessed state of Nirvana and will be filled up with great joy.
- **Arjuna's question:** So, Arjuna understands all this. We have to read in between the sentences. He says "O'Lord, whatever you said I understand by your grace." But there is a common problem which is faced by each one of us. Arjuna represents all of us. What is the problem? I understand, what is the right, I know what is right, I desire to do what is right but something seems to be preventing me. So, what is that tremendous force in spite of my desire sits in my path like a huge mountain and does not allow me to do what I know and what is right to do. On the contrary perhaps it is making me to do what I don't want to do which is something wrong, evil and adharma. I am unable to understand it.
- **God's deluding power of Maya:**

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥ 7/14॥
daivī hyeṣhā guṇa-mayī mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante māyām etāṁ taranti te

So, Lord Krishna is answering to the Arjuna's doubt. What is the obstacle? The Lord is telling "It is my maya, my deluding power दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया daivī hyeṣhā guṇa-mayī mama māyā It is my maya - my maya of delusion - my deluding power - it is this maya my inscrutable power - inscrutable because Shankaracharya defines maya as अघटना - घटना- पटियसी **Aghatan - Ghatana - Patiasī** It makes even God forget his nature and make Him think that He is not God but He is a bound soul. So, this power or maya never manifests directly as maya just as we can never experience electricity. We only can experience effects of electricity in the form of light, in the form of heat, in the form of movement for example fan, in the form of attraction like a magnet but directly we can never experience electricity.

- **Kama & Krodha:** Therefore, this power manifests in the form of काम एषा क्रोध एषा **kāma eṣha krodha eṣha (C3/V37)** mainly in the form of lust and anger. Lust means tremendous desire which takes us away from God which separates us from God and. makes us go away far from God. Simply it is desire for the temporary fleeting objects of the world. When our desires are frustrated then it produces a tremendous passion called krodha that is anger. Whenever we are angry with anybody or with anything, we have to know that if we did not have desire then there would be no anger. This means there is a hidden desire. This frustrated foiled desire is called anger. As we know it Leads to greediness then delusion then pride then jealousy and all sorts of evil consequences. The Lord very clearly teaching us - find out how much of wrong desires, even so called good desires from the spiritual perspective is a wrong desire. For example, somebody may be trying to do service to the world or by being charitable or philanthropic - in the beginning stages that is a right step forward but later on the man may be caught

unaware following into the net of what is called - craving for name, fame, power, position etc. So these above are the two (kama & krodha) main obstacles but in other chapters of the Gita Lord adds one more.

- **Three door ways leading to worldliness - kama, krodha and lobha:**

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मन

कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत्॥ C16/V21

*tri-vidham narakasyedam dvaram nasanam atmana
kamah krodhas तथा lobhastasmad etat trayam tyajet.*

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मन There are three door ways leading to worldliness - kama, krodha and lobha. Usually in our old age we fall victim to our creed. Why? Because even if it is possible to fulfil our desires our body doesn't allow us to fulfil our desires. So it is useless to become angry because nobody cares for an old man. But, then have so much money, so much material that it self turns into greediness, delusion etc these are called the six inner enemies of the human being. But, they all stem from one root cause which is called kama.

- **What is Prema प्रेमा?**

If this kama can be controlled and directed towards God then this is called by a new name 'Prema'. Desire is the same, strength is the same but if it is directed towards world then it binds us but if it is directed towards God then it will definitely take us nearer to God. That name is called 'Prema' - love for the divine.

- **Conquer demonic qualities:** Then the Lord advises "Therefore, O'Arjuna strive to conquer these demonic qualities and replace them with divine qualities. Thus alone you will make progress in life and attain to true knowledge of your own-self which is divine and you will become Free.

In short, this is the essence of the third chapter of the Bhagavat Gita called the Karma-Yoga.

Now, we are entering into the fourth chapter of the Bhagavat Gita.

Recording 23 minutes.

Forth Chapter Jyana-Karma-Sanyasa-Yoga

This chapter is aptly titled as ***Jyana-Karma-Sanyasa-Yoga***.

True meaning of word sanayasa:

Those who are not well versed with Sanskrit - do not mis-understand the word sanyasa which means giving up....so give up jyanam! give up karma-yoga! give up yoga and become a useless fellow!

Is this what chapter dealing with? NO!

What it means is that through this knowledge that I am serving God every karma can be elevated and transformed. Every activity can be transformed into an act of sacrifice and into an act of divine love. A most wonderful idea which in the third chapter Lord advocated that convert every action of yours into *yagna*.

What is *yagna*?

Yagna is to remember our true nature that we belong to God. This whole world belongs to God. Whatever we think we are and whatever we think we have - everything comes from God. It belongs to God and it goes back to God. It becomes one with God. This knowledge that everything is God and everything belongs to God that is called yagna or sacrifice.

What is the obstruction? Ego (is the obstruction). So sacrifice the ego and in place of the ego establish God. That is called yagna or sacrifice.

In this Forth chapter there are many varieties of yagna are outlined. One speciality is - without full awareness of God that all this is being done in order to know my true nature that I am a child of God.

In order to know my true nature, that I am a child of God, and a potential Divine being. Without that awareness, without that Jnana, or knowledge, then karma brings only mere fruitless and binding results. It will make us go deeper into the state of worldliness.

In the 4th chapter, there is not one but many types of yagnas are there – almost 12 types of different yagnas. It very graphically describes how different people, through different activities, with the same goal of God Realisation, are trying to move forward towards the Lord. We shall come to that later.

So, Jnana Karma – karma should be the full knowledge that everything is divine, and that state is called sannyasa. Sannyasa means total surrender to God, and this particular chapter is called **Jnana Karma Sannyasa Yoga** – the yoga of intelligently converting all activities into true knowledge.

Knowledge means here not worldly knowledge, but Self Knowledge, meaning “I am Divine”.

Before entering into this 4th chapter, I would like to summarise briefly essential points. If we can keep in mind the essential points of the 4th chapter, called Jnana Karma Sannyasa Yoga, some people also call it simply Jnana yoga, or the yoga of knowledge.

If we can keep the points, it will help us to understand this chapter in a much better way, and when we understand better, we can also remember in a better way, and that will help us to practice the learnings in our day to day life.

Essential points of the Forth Chapter called Jnana Karma Sannyasa Yoga

So here is the essence of the 4th Chapter of the Gita :-

1. The Lord says, as if in answer to the question of Arjuna, that you teach me knowledge. As if the Lord anticipates such a question! Then He makes a strange statement that “I have taught this ancient yoga, many thousands of years back, to the Sun God, and through that Guru-Parampara, teacher-disciple tradition, that knowledge was nicely coming down and being spread to the whole world. So I have taught the same yoga in answer to the Sun’s worries, many thousands of years ago”.

Naturally, Arjuna was confounded. You are a contemporary to me, you are born along with me, how could you claim you have been teaching this thousands of years back?

Then the Lord answers, “I have been born many, many times. You have also been born many times. The difference is you do not remember! But I do remember every birth of mine”. This is a clear indication of Hinduism’s firm belief, that every Jiva, or bound soul, has had many past lives, will have many future lives [*how many and for how long?*] – until he knows he is God. Then only the cycle of transmigration will stop completely – I know everything.

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।
तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परन्तप ॥ 4.5॥

*bahūni me vyatītāni janmāni tava chārjuna
tānyaham veda sarvāṇi na tvam vettha parantapa*

So, this is the lesson we have to learn :-

- we had many past lives
- unfortunately we do not remember
- we do not need to remember

Because if we remember all those lives, even small details we are cramming in our minds, create so much confusion. If we have to remember all the friends, all the enemies, all the sufferings we have gone through, 84 lakhs of births, then simply there would not be enough space in a lunatic asylum to keep us!

So God out of his infinite mercy, has given us only a little bit of memory, and the most important thing is with the help of this memory, we should be able to progress in spiritual life, until our true memory comes.

What is our true memory? Smriti ! What is smriti – I am Divine!

I mentioned also in the previous talks, that at the end of the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord questions Arjuna, a wonderful question he puts :-

“ Did you hear my Teachings, with faith and with concentration?”.

Arjuna categorically replies, “Yes, I have heard.”

Because the Lord implies, if you had heard, then you would have been a conqueror of delusion, *moha*. Then Arjuna, categorically answers :

(नष्टो मोहः स्मृतिर्लब्धा त्वत्प्रसादान्मयाच्युत । स्थितोऽस्मि गतसन्देहः करिष्ये वचनं तव ॥ 18/73॥)

“**nasto moha नष्टो मोहः**” [my delusion is destroyed].

"smriti labdha स्मृतिर्लब्धा" [I got the memory that I am not Arjuna, but I am Paramatman, I am Krishna!]

How did I get it? Through your grace alone, not in any other way. So, that is the attempt we all have to do, until that time when we gain that atma-smriti, we have to be born again and again. The world is not meant to give us, either happiness or unhappiness, but it is meant like a school, to teach us a lesson to strengthen our intellectual, rational, moral and spiritual muscles – until we know we are the children of God.

So, that is the truth about it.

God incarnates in this world.

Then, in Hinduism, one of the most fundamental beliefs is that God incarnates in this world, whenever man forgets his true nature and under the power of delusion, he misbehaves and suffers a lot.

In other words, when dharma goes down, when adharma (evil) increases, I incarnate myself. He said, I incarnate, I will come to that point shortly.

What do I do as an incarnation? How many times He will come? As long as there is adharma, He will come.

And when will He come?

- When there is a necessity, and mankind forgets its true nature and behaves as though they are not divine,
- when they become demonic and their demonic nature comes forward,
- start

..out of infinite compassion, the Lord incarnates Himself in a human form and tries to teach people what is a true way of living, what is a false way of living. He says, if you live according to my instructions, you will realise your true nature and you will become eternally free. You will attain liberation or moksha. That is the **Avatara Tatwa**.

Every Hindu, firmly believes, God incarnates again and again and again, whenever it is necessary. So, this wisdom that is coming, the vedantic wisdom, is traditionally the first point but in the course of time, people become arrogant, proud and self-mesmerised. They forget the goal of life, then the Guru also forgets and he preaches or mis-preaches, the disciples also mis-preach, then God incarnates once more, to teach the same truths from age to age.

Why the same truth? Because being truth, truth never changes. But then every incarnation, not only preaches, highlights and re-interprets how that truth can be made practical in our day to day life, because according to changed circumstances, the Eternal values have also got to be changed slightly.

Mind you, truth doesn't change, but its application can slightly change, according to the changed circumstances – what Swami Ranganathanandaji termed, “ Eternal Values for a Changing Society”.

So I will teach you the same thing, and that is the purpose of my incarnations.

My birth as a human being, is a mysterious divine effect. Why mysterious? If God's birth is real, then the birth into a human body, can occur only in one way – because the person had done some karma, some past actions, and every birth is the result of those past actions.

But in reality, the Lord doesn't have any past births or any future births, therefore it is logical to feel also that his present birth will not be there. It seems to be there but it is not there.

The same truth applies to us also, as if we are born, as if this world is real, as if my body-mind is also real, as if this born body is going to dissolve at the time of death – all these are nothing but delusions, born out of ignorance.

So the Lord is telling, when I incarnate, I come with a tremendous quantum of power, and with the highest ideology, as preached in our past scriptures, and I prove their reality by practicing myself, and I once more, try to establish this dharma.

The word dharma has got 3 meanings :-

1. To remind ourselves what is our true nature.
2. Whatever activities or duties are conducive for me to remember my own true nature. Duties, obligations, responsibilities, according to our birth, according to our

caste, according to our age – these are secondary details. The primary meaning of dharma is to remember our own true nature, to keep it in mind and slowly but steadily, to progress towards manifestation of my true nature.

3. To help other people, as far as its possible, to remember their own true nature but we do it as Karmayoga, without expecting any result. Which means, if we help others, don't feel that they are going to be really helped. If we are teaching, do not at any time feel that you are changing another person. Your only hope is that you convey it properly and pray to God that God helps that person to change himself or herself.

These are the 3 meanings of dharma.

Then also the Lord says, there are good people who need to be protected. There are evil people who need to be subdued. Therefore I also perform the functions of protection of the righteous and suppression of evil people. Sometimes it may be necessary even to kill – they are not killing the person, they are killing the body because that body is impossible to convert in this life, maybe their next life.

So, this what I do.

My birth is a mystery, my activities are also a mystery and whoever comes to know the secret of my own divine birth, my divine activities, he himself will progress in spiritual life, this would be his last birth. Once this body falls, *etva deham*, he attains Me and he is not going to be reborn again.

Once more, we can apply the same truth, which belongs to the Lord, and also to ourselves.

Indirectly and directly, He is telling “My birth is a divine mystery”. My activities are mysterious – He is also telling us indirectly, “your birth, your activities are also a divine mystery”.

“You, the Paramatma, who is the embodiment of knowledge, how could you forget that knowledge? How could you, from a state of knowledge, slip down into a state of total ignorance? It is impossible”.

It seems to be so, but it is not so. Just as we, in our dreams, lying in our bed comfortably after a nice dinner, feel that we are deserted in a desolate land, and we are suffering so much, and someone is giving us so much trouble, and we feel that is all real and we forget our true nature. But as soon as our Guru wakes us up, then immediately we understand it is nothing but an imagination gone astray.

Similarly, we think that we are human beings, we are limited beings, we are ignorant, we are subjected to much suffering, and have only a little bit of happiness.

Ultimately, when we wake up, we laugh at ourselves and think “what stupid fools we have been” :-

- I was never born,
- I never lived in this worldly life,
- I never died,
- This is all but **kalpana**, my imagination.

So, the Divine Lord is telling, so many people, they take every incarnation as an ideal. By following in the footsteps of the incarnation, so many people in the past have attained Me, so many people are striving to do right now, and so many people will do so in the future.

बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः || 4.10||

bahavo jñāna-tapasā pūtā mad-bhāvam āgatāḥ

[Purified, by the fire of knowledge, they have performed a lot of austerities and destroyed their impurities. In a pure mind, I reflect Myself, and I make them remember that You are Me and I am You].

Therefore, anybody who strives to pray to Me, strives to meditate upon Me, by My grace, I remove My Maya from them. I purify them and I manifest Myself in the form of right understanding :

धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

dhiyo yo naḥ prachodayāt

“So, O Arjuna, you also follow the footsteps of these great souls, who have meditated upon the divine mystery of incarnations, and you will also in the end ultimately attain Me”.

This is an advice for all the spiritual practitioners, each one of us.

Then the Lord is telling, “ I have created the whole world, I have created human beings and I have created human beings into 4 castes”.

This is a very controversial subject, Hinduism has courted ruin through the creation of 4 castes, making some people very inferior, some people favoured as very special, highest type of personality etc, here is the wonderful refutation of it. The Lord says :-

“I have not created people according to My will, I divided people into 4 castes according to the qualities they have”. What qualities? Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, and also actions they do.

If they are inferior actions, they belong to the lowest class; if they are a mixture of good and evil, they belong to the middle class; and if they are doing only pure spiritual activities, then they are called brahmanas. So, this is the true secret of caste and wherever we are, in whichever country we are, if you notice people carefully, you'll find each one is dominated by one particular quality – whether they call themselves rich, or celebrities or great intellectual people, it is not these things that really count, it is their character.

Division of character as tamasika, rajasika or sattvika is what is really meant by caste. Unfortunately, the caste system has become an affair of birth and a lot of injustice has been done.

Swami Vivekananda, that is Sri Ramakrishna through Swami Vivekananda, had come to clarify what is the true caste understanding and to help us evolve from a lower quality to a higher quality. That is the real purpose and we will discuss this topic in the future.

The Lord says, “ Actions do not contain, I have no desire for the results of actions. Actions do not bind me. He who knows me thus, is also not bound by the results of any actions”.

[4.14]

Just as no action can bind me, and the biggest action is creation, maintenance, sustenance and dissolution.

“Thus knowing, many people perform actions without any attachment and ultimately attain Me. O man, you also follow the same path and you will also ultimately come to Me.” **[4.15]**

So how do we do this in practice?

For that, the Lord describes that there are several types of sacrifices, which we will discuss in the future, that whatever activity a person has to do, either through the accident of his birth or circumstance, he can convert it into a sacrifice and he can also attain the Lord.

But the greatest sacrifice has been condensed into one particular verse, which all over the world, many devotees chant. This comes in the 4th chapter – it is the Jnana Yagna – the sacrifice of knowledge to see God in everything.

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥ 4.24॥

brahmārpaṇaṁ brahma havir brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam

brahmaiva tena gantavyaṁ brahma-karma-samādhinā

The doer is God, in other words :-

- the doer is Brahman,
- the offerer is Brahman,

- that which he offers is also Brahman,
- that into which he offers, that is also Brahman, and
- the instruments through which this offering is done, that is also Brahman.

The Lord gives a most marvellous title that if a person performs this Jnana Yagna, this sacrifice of knowledge, then he will attain to Brahman. Constantly he feels I am Brahman, whether he is awake, dreaming or in deep sleep – this is called **Brahma Karma Samadhi**.

So, ultimately we have to get the knowledge. What knowledge? That I am Divine!

If we perform the teachings of the Lord, keeping the teachings of the Lord in mind, and convert all our actions into divine actions, ultimately, the knowledge that is already within us, will be uncovered.

This knowledge, in the form of memory, that **smriti** will come back : I am God.

Ultimately that is the true knowledge, and this knowledge burns every activity, good or evil. This is because Vedanta teaches us that good actions are like golden chains, evil actions are like iron chains. Both bind but the golden chains probably bind more strongly than the iron chains.

So, ultimately, this Jnana, destroys, burns to ashes all the results of karma and man becomes totally free. He knows 'I am Divine', and this is beautifully illustrated and explained in the 4th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita – which we discuss in a future class.

Class ends with these beautiful teachings and Slokas.
To be cont'd..

Om

**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.

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Mamta Misra & Hari Sundaresan.