

Bhagavad Gita online Class 69 on 14 Dec 2019 by Swami Dayatmanada (Lecture delivered online from Bangalore, India)

Shanti Patha:

ॐ वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम्
देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥ १ ॥

Vasudeva sutham devam, Kamsa Chanura mardanam,
Devaki paramanandam, Krishnam vande jagat gurum

I worship Lord Krishna, Who is the spiritual master of the universe, who is the son of Vasudeva, who is the Lord, who killed Kamsa and Chanura, and who is the bliss of Devaki.

सर्वोपनिषदो गावो, दोग्धा गोपाल नन्दनः।
पार्थो वत्सः सुधीर्भोक्ता, दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥
Sarvopanishado gaavo, dogdha gopala nandanaha|
parthovatsa: sudheerbhoktaa, dugdham gitamrutam mahat |

All the Upanishads are likened to the cows. The milker is Krishna, the son of Gopala. Partha is likened to the calf, while the drinkers are the wise ones. The nectar of Gita is the milk.

मूकं करोति वाचालं पङ्गुं लङ्घयते गिरिं ।
यत्कृपा तमहं वन्दे परमानन्द माधवम् ॥
Mookam karoti vachalam pangum langhayate girim |
Yat-krupa tamaham vande paramananda madhavam ॥

I remember with devotion the divine grace of Krishna who can make the dumb speak with eloquence and the lame cross high mountains.

I remember and extol that grace which flows from the Supreme Bliss manifestation of Madhava.

The Attainment of Brahmi Stithi (ब्राह्मी स्थिति)

Earlier, we discussed Bhagavan Sri Krishna's teaching of how to attain to that state of higher spiritual life called *Brahmi Stithi* (ब्राह्मी स्थिति). That is, how a person who has realized that he is the Atman, that he is God: how behaves in this world.

In that connection, the Lord is indicating to us a particular characteristic whereby he says: whatever action a man of God (or a realized soul or a man who knows who he is) performs, how does he do it? First, he doesn't think he is doing anything. Second, he is not attached to any of the result because he has already attained the result of all actions. Third, whatever he does only contributes to the welfare of the world.

This was so beautifully brought out in the 23rd verse:

गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः ।
यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥ 23॥

*gata-saṅgasya muktasya jñānāvasthita-chetasah
yajñāyācharataḥ karma samagraṁ praviliyate*

The works of a man whose attachment is gone, who is free, and whose mind is established in Knowledge, melts away entirely, being done as a yajna.

Example:

Those who are familiar with the episode of the life of Jesus Christ, it is written about Jesus that God sent his own son as a sacrifice for uplifting the world. How do we understand this statement that God had sent his son? We also need to understand in this context that God doesn't have any children. The whole world is the manifestation of God. Jesus Christ is only a very special manifestation of God whom we worship as an incarnation of God. So literally, God sent His son as a sacrifice for uplifting the whole world. Therefore, the birth of Jesus, everything that he did, and even the way he passed away, was a great sacrifice in this world.

Characteristics of yajna:

In Sanskrit, this word sacrifice is aptly termed as *yajna*. This has certain characteristics:

- First, the doer doesn't think he is doing. On the contrary, he thinks it is God who is doing. This is going to be elaborated in the next verse, the 24th verse.
- Second, such a person is completely devoid of attachment. We have to understand clearly only who has attained the highest can afford to be detached. Until we attain the Infinite, whatever we do, there is bound to be some amount of attachment.
- Third, he is liberated, that means he doesn't think he is the body-mind, he thinks he is God, he thinks he knows he is everything.
- Fourth, his mind is constantly – without deviation – is centred in the knowledge that not only I am the Atman, I am the Brahman, but also what ignorant people call this world is also none other than Brahman. Brahman, seen without any stain, directly, is experienced as Brahman. The same Brahman experienced through the prism of the mind is called the world. Whenever anyone looks at Brahman, it is through the mirror or prism of the mind.

What is the mind?

The mind is what Shankaracharya aptly terms as nama, rupa, karma (name, form and action). That is what we call *jagat*. *Jagat* without mind is Brahman. Brahman looked at with mind is called *jagat*. That is the state of knowledge.

When a person has realized that continuously, whatever actions, activities, that person achieves through the instrumentality of body-mind, are called a sacrifice.

It is to be understood that sacrifice doesn't mean a person losing something valuable, it simply means whatever is done with love, for the sake of God, without the idea that I am doing (it is God alone who is doing everything, through everything, for the sake of the world), or His own sake in other words, that is called a sacrifice. And that is the goal we all have to achieve.

And as described earlier, Jesus Christ was a realized soul, he knew he was the Atman, or God, so whatever he did, even his very breath, is a prayer offering to the Divine. He did not do a sacrifice for the sake of the world. In his vision, nothing existed except God. His own Father is none other than God Himself.

The Need For Spiritual Practice:

Therefore, each one of us,

- if we wish to attain the highest,
- if we wish to know who we really are,
- if we really want to become free, and
- if we want to have true self-knowledge,

has to slowly do spiritual practice.

All spiritual practices are ultimately called yajnas. When we do with a particular idea that (a) I am not doing, (b) it is God who is doing, (c) it is God who is the offering, (d) it is God who is the instrument of doing, and (e) whatever is being done, is only for His own self, in the form of the world, that is the goal. That is called the achievement of the self-knowledge.

This idea has been beautifully brought out in the 24th verse:

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥ 24॥

*brahmārpaṇaṁ brahma havir brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam
brahmaiva tena gantavyaṁ brahma-karma-samādhinā*

To him Brahman is the offering and Brahman is the oblation, and it is Brahman who offers the oblation into the fire of Brahman. Brahman alone is attained by him who thus sees Brahman in action.

We need to find some examples, to see if it is really possible in anyone's life. When we look at the incarnations of God, let us say Jesus Christ or Buddha, Rama, Krishna, Chaitanya, Ramakrishna, and every other incarnation, not only who was in the past, but who is going to come in the future, too, we see that they come and lead their lives as a yajna.

Swami Vivekananda recognized it and composed that most wonderful *stotram*, or hymn, it is called *avatara stotram*, in which he described not only Sri Ramakrishna, but every incarnation of God. Therefore it is called *Avatara Stotram*, not Sri Ramakrishna *stotram*.

When we examine that hymn, which is sung by millions of people all over the world every single evening, we find there is not a single mention of the name Ramakrishna. But all the characteristics of all incarnations are mentioned there.

The line referred to here is, *pranarpana jagata-tarana, krintana-kali-dor*. Their very life, their birth, their living and even their death, it is all the greatest sacrifice for the purpose of *jagata tarana* – uplifting the world, for the sake of making the whole world realize that each soul is potentially divine, and bless them and inspire them and help them.

An interesting incident we can recall in this context is as follows. Sri Ramakrishna, just before his passing away, he put Swami Vivekananda (then Narendranath) into a state of ecstasy (Samadhi), and both of them merged into samadhi, and when they came out, Narendranath was found Sri Ramakrishna was shedding tears and saying a very significant statement: *O Naren, today by offering everything to you, I have become a fakir.*

It should not bring into our mind negative connotations to our mind. We shouldn't imagine that Sri Ramakrishna was regretting his actions, that Sri Ramakrishna had lost everything. Indeed, he was joyfully shedding tears, implying that henceforth, he would work through Narendranath, that the purpose of his own body and mind was finished and therefore won't remain any longer. Instead, this personality called Ramakrishna will enter into Narendranath. From now onwards, it will work through him, through his body, and even afterwards (after Narendranath's passing away) in the form of ideas.

So Sri Ramakrishna is called bhavamaya, an embodiment of ideas. Whenever we get inspiration, right understanding about life, it is because of Sri Ramakrishna's sacrifice. Swami Vivekananda knew it and he accepted it. He used to refer to himself as his master's voice, or a voice without a form. When Swami Vivekananda went to America, he addressed the audience: not only all the people who attended at that time, and also those who are going to be addressed in the coming centuries. When he said "Sisters and Brothers of America", he did not mean only the people of America. Anyone, everyone, who listens to that Divine Voice, is a brother, or a sister, of Swami Vivekananda.

Who was Swami Vivekananda? A Rishi, or one who knows he is the *atman*, not the body and mind. So Swami Vivekananda had, as it were, given initiation to thousands of people and commanded them to propagate the idea I have given you: That all of you are potentially divine.

He wanted them to convey that message that anybody who listens and is automatically inspired, or initiated, into that maha-mantra – what Advaita Vedanta calls अहम् ब्रह्मास्मि (*aham brahmasmi* or "I am the Absolute"). Of course, just by listening we don't realize it, but at least the seed has entered our mind, and we have to work, probably through many lives, to realize the truth that I am not the mind, but the atman.

Once we realize that, we also come to know the truth that everything in this world is nothing but manifestation of the same God, the same Brahman, but with name and form. With this idea as the background, we will explore the next verse.

This is a famous verse, the highest truth, which millions of people utter before eating, whether they understand or not. The mantra is familiar to all of us:

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविरब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥ 24॥

*brahmārpaṇaṁ brahma havir brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam
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To him Brahman is the offering and Brahman is the oblation, and it is Brahman who offers the oblation into the fire of Brahman. Brahman alone is attained by him who thus sees Brahman in action.

What is Yajna?

This word, yajna, is an ancient Vedic word. In ancient times, people used to worship, and that worship was called yajna. In earlier days, we did not have hymns like particular names and forms of God as we have them now. They used to worship special deities like Indra and Varuna. Most often, people used to light up a fire, and they used to offer into that fire certain natural things like ghee etc. That is what they called as a yajna.

Now yajna has been completely transformed with expansive connotations by Bhagawan Krishna. Whenever a person had performed a yajna, we have to keep four things in mind:

- the person who is doing the yajna offering
- the offering being put into a particular thing called fire
- the action that is being done, and
- the result.

The doer, the offering, and that unto which it is being offered, the action of offering, and by implication the result, these five things are implied in every sacrifice. These five things are also included in whatever action we are able to do.

Example:

If I am talking, I am the talker, you are the persons who are listening, my talking sincerely to the best of my ability is the offering, this action of talking is the sacrifice that is offered unto the fire of your intelligence, so that the result will be the passage of knowledge from one person to another. Or if there is a better understanding of life, that would be the result.

If we expand this example, whatever action we do, there is a person to whom it is done, there is an object, there is a subject, there is an action of offering, and there is an object unto which it is offered, and the result. So Bhagawan Krishna is teaching us a great lesson here: whatever action we are doing through our body and mind, through our sense organs, thoughts, we need to attach God to everything.

In other words, think: Who is doing? Not me, but God. And to whom is it being done? God in the form of the object. And what is the way to do it? The different sense organs, with the help of *prana*, through whom the action is being done. And what is the purpose – there is a result to be achieved. And finally, the result is achieved. Everything is done by God, for God, through God, with God, for the purpose of achieving God.

Another Example:

To make this point clearer, consider another example to really understand this hymn. Supposing you are sleeping, and dream that you find that a guest has come to your house. You cook some food and feed the guest in your dream. So you cook the food for your hungry guest. Your action is to cooking the food and offering it to the guest. The result is, the guest becomes satiated, satisfied, his hunger is removed. Now, when you are dreaming, you think you, your guest, the act of cooking, the food itself, and the person eating the food and satisfying himself are all different.

Upon waking up, you will see that your mind has become the doer, the food, the guest, and the act of cooking and offering the food to your guest, and the satisfaction of the guest. Everything is done by you. Just to add some humour, imagine that the person who came to you in your dream was your neighbour, and was of course very happy to be fed in the dream.

If after waking up, you go to your neighbour and expect him to thank you for your services, he would be surprised because he doesn't know what you did for him. All the actions, cooking the food, the persons serving and eating, the food itself, the act of eating, and the satisfaction experienced, everything is in your mind.

Everything is God Alone:

If we can take this analogy and apply it, then we can understand the meaning of this verse better, that

- it is God really who is the doer,
- God is doing something to the world,
- God is doing something through the sense organs,
- God is getting the action done,
- the object is getting transformed is also God, and,
- the result is also God

In other words, everything, from the beginning to the end, is nothing but God.

Real-Life Examples:

Now let us consider some real-life examples from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. One day, he gave a very beautiful talk, and the audience were extra-impressed that day. One of them remarked: *Sir, today you spoke very beautifully.* Immediately, Sri Ramakrishna replied: *No, I did not speak, it was my Divine Mother. I don't know anything. She is the one who spoke, and it is Her knowledge. She spoke through me to Herself in other people. Not only is She working in me, through me, for me, but She is also talking to Herself in the form of other people. From one point of view, She was feeling, I am the knowledgeable, wise person, while from another viewpoint, She is thinking, I am ignorant. So the wise me is talking to the ignorant me, and as a result feeling that I am a very effective, inspiring person. From the beginning to the end, it is nothing but God.*

If we ask the Holy Mother: *Mother, why are you so kind, so gracious, extra-compassionate to your children? You are feeding us, not only physically, but spiritually, morally and intellectually!* She would reply: *Yes, you are my children, and it is my duty as a mother to do so.*

But in reality, She knows that She is the Mother, She is the children, She is the knowledge, She is the act of offering, She is the fire unto which she is offering, and She is also the enjoyer of the results. Swami Vivekananda, when asked whether he had uplifted people in America and other places, replied that, it was Sri Ramakrishna who had done it through him. If we ask Sri Ramakrishna who did it, he would say it was not him but his Mother who did it.

This is the very natural condition of people who know that their Atman, that they are Brahman. But what about people are sincerely wishing to attain to that state?

Bhagawan Krishna tells us that we have slowly practice this in whatever we are doing. Take a simple example: I am talking. What should I think? I am talking on this scripture called the Bhagawad Gita. It doesn't belong to me, it belongs to Bhagawan Krishna. I read it, and I understood it. The ability to read is given to me by Bhagawan. The ability to understand has also been given by Bhagawan. Because Bhagawan Krishna Himself says, when I am pleased with somebody's spiritual practice, I enlighten his understanding (*buddhiyogam dadamyaham*).

Practically every Hindu daily prays to the divine, saying, *dhiyoyonaha prachodayath* (give me, o Lord, the right understanding). And we know that the right understanding really comes from God Himself. But from the highest viewpoint, everything is done by God, for God, unto God, that is the highest knowledge we have to aim for. Every spiritual aspirant, by practicing this act, what is called *Brahmarpanam*, which is, note, it is not confined only to the time of taking food.

People may wonder why this example is used only before food. The reason is that human nature is curious. We may forget everything, but not eating. So at least before eating, we remember that whatever we do, is being done by God only.

Now we have to apply this truth, this Sadhana, to every activity, but let us start with one activity regularly, and expand it gradually. When reading, who is reading? It is God. What is being read? God. What is the knowledge? God. And what is the result? God becomes enlightened.

Seeing God Everywhere:

Similarly, we have to expand this idea of seeing God everywhere, in every activity that we do, slowly. Yet another example may be presented here. Most of us, we sit and do some *japam*. When we do *japam*, we need to understand who is doing *japam*, really speaking? A spiritual practitioner, who has been inspired by God, by the grace of God, he wants to realize God. He is in fact *jiva*, none other than God. His guru is also God. The teaching he receives is also God, and he is repeating the name of God. He is offering the result that *japa*, ultimately, to God, and he expects God's grace, to enlighten him, to ultimately give him the knowledge that he is none other than Brahman. This is how we have to expand.

When we examine this, there are two factors that we need to take into consideration. A realized soul had attained to this state by practicing spiritual discipline. What is that discipline? The doer, the action, and unto which he does, everything is done by God Himself. No credit comes to me, because I myself belong to God. That is the first factor. The second is, a person doesn't become an enlightened soul after practicing sadhana for a few minutes. Rather, he starts with a simple idea and applies God to that particular activity, and expands it into a second activity, a third activity, and then to his entire waking state, to his entire dream state, and to his entire deep-sleep state, until there is no state which has not been included. Slowly, such a person begins to say: whatever I do in the waking state, God is doing, whatever I do in the dream state, God is doing, and whatever happens to me in the deep-sleep state, God is doing.

The Turiya State Explained:

When a person becomes capable of realizing the truth that I am not, but only God, that state is called *Turiya Avastha* (तुरीय अवस्था), or the highest fourth state. In reality it is not really a fourth state, but the ground for the other three states. Let us remember, a spiritual person, through gradual practice, starts seeing only God everywhere, until he knows without a break, that it is God who does everything. Every spiritual aspirant has to gradually extend this knowledge that, everything that he does, everything he enjoys, everything he suffers, every activity, every experience, is really done by God, experienced by God, is an offering to God. Everything is done for God, by God, in God, unto God. This is called *Brahma-lila* (ब्रह्म लीला), or enjoying the *lila* of God in everything. Such a person is really filled with eternal, infinite, indescribable bliss.

Now any activity can be turned into a yajna, a sacrifice, in the sense of the ability to see God in every activity. To give us some examples, Bhagawan Krishna mentions twelve of these sacrifices. The goal of all these sacrifices is not the actions by themselves, but to attain to the state of Brahman. Let us recollect this is the goal of all yajnas, to understand that Brahman is the oblation, Brahman is the clarified butter, Brahman is the oblation poured into the fire of Brahman, and Brahman, verily, shall be reached by him who always sees Brahman in every action. That means he knows I am Brahman. Such a vision of seeing everything as Brahman is called Brahma-karma Samadhi. It is a Samadhi, knowledge, that is the goal of every type of sacrifice, and twelve such sacrifices have been specifically described.

We should not be misled into thinking that there are only twelve kinds of sacrifices. There are many varieties of activities, and all activities can be yajnas, or can be converted into yajnas. Even suffering is a yajna. The Upanishads say that if a person, a spiritual aspirant is suffering from fever, and it is giving him pain, then he should consider it as a tapasya (austerity). In other words, as a sacrifice to God. This suffering of a person is his spiritual sadhana, and he should offer it unto God. Ultimately, who is suffering? It is only God who is suffering.

Example From Sri Ramakrishna's Life:

Another example may be presented here. Sri Ramakrishna, as we all know, was suffering from a very painful throat cancer. He was even unable to eat, and was consequently reduced to a skeleton. Those who are seeing the photograph seen after his passing away, can hardly recognize Sri Ramakrishna by comparing with his earlier photographs. His condition was such that he was hardly able to even move. One day, a disciple of his, called Hari, (later called Swami Turiyananda) came to see Sri Ramakrishna, and Sri Ramakrishna perhaps wanted to test him. So he said to Hari Maharaj: *See, how much am I suffering!* But Hari Maharaj replied: *No Sir, I see you swimming in the ocean of bliss!* Sri Ramakrishna immediately laughed out and remarked, *This Rascal has found me out!*

For ordinary, ignorant eyes like ours, Sri Ramakrishna was really suffering. But for enlightened eyes like Swami Turiyananda's, who was he? Brahman? What was the disease? Brahman? What was the suffering? Brahman? If a person is suffering from a disease called Brahman, would he be joyful or sad? Now you will have to think over it and come to your own conclusion. If any one of you think it is suffering, then you will have to think, twice, thrice, any number of times, because God's nature is Sat-Chit-Ananda.

I will briefly outline those twelve yajnas. First of all, where are the yajnas described? In the vedas. And how are they performed? Every sacrifice needs to be performed only through hard, sincere, concentrated action, and when man knows this, he is capable of converting each one of the actions into a Divine sacrifice. What will be the result? What is he going to get? What will he attain? He will attain liberation.

Twelve Examples of Yajnas:

Various forms of yajnas are mentioned from verse 25 to 30. In this fourth chapter of the Bhagawad Gita are describes only twelve. As mentioned earlier, whether one is breathing, opening or closing the eyelid, eating, talking, walking, or doing some other action, every action can be converted into a sacrifice. Twelve sacrifices have been described as samples:

- Daiva yajna, worshipping various forms of gods and goddesses
 - Brahma yajna meaning converting every activity by thinking it is Brahman
 - Sense control
 - Rejection of sense object or merging their activities into self-control
 - Mind control
 - Materials a person possesses (wealth etc.), called material sacrifice
 - Austerity sacrifice, or performing special austerities for the sake of God or God's manifestation (which is the world)
 - Yoga-yajna, practicing any limb of yoga (such as yama, niyama)
 - Swadhyaya-yajna, studying some scripture for the sake of advancing in spiritual life
- Swadhyaya means two things:

- the study of scriptures with the idea that they are absolutely true, with sincerity and absolute self-control, and with complete self-discipline, regularly, and with a great amount of joy, and
- swa + adhyaya, or studying one's own mind, and finding out where one's weaknesses lie, where the strengths lie, enhancing the virtues over time, and trying to overcome the weaknesses and vices
- Gnana yajna, or perceiving everything with the vision of knowledge that everything is God. Here, a quotation from the Avatara Stotram by Swami Vivekananda may be given: *Gnananjana vimala nayana veekshane moha jaaye*. When Sri Ramakrishna looks at us, he always looks at us with the collyrium of knowledge. That means he puts on a special type of lenses on his eyes, whereby he sees nothing but God. As you might remember, when Arjuna requested Bhagawan Krishna, in the eleventh chapter of the Bhagawad Gita: *O Lord, whatever you said is absolutely true I know, but I want to experience*. Bhagawan Krishna responds: *You can't experience Me as divine, unless I give you special vision (divya chakshu), which I will grant you now*. When he was granted that, Arjuna saw the whole drama in a frightening sense, and he could not retain what he saw. What he saw was a divinity in the form of the world, especially three activities:
 - creation,
 - preservation and
 - destruction

We have no problem with creation and preservation, but we have a terrible problem with destruction. So Arjuna, on the battlefield, he saw horrible death in a most excruciating, painful manner, that is why he could not stand it. This is called gnana-yajna, putting on the collyrium or spectacles of knowledge. What is it? The killer is also God, the killed is also God, act of killing is also God, the act of killing in a torturing manner is also sacrifice, and God is sacrificing Himself. We can discuss this idea at some other point. There is a beautiful stotram called *Purusha Suktam*. There it is said, God sacrificed Himself in order to become this world, in other world. In other words, God himself is the appearance, with names and forms, as I, as you, as everybody, and everything in this world. This special way of converting an ordinary experience into a spiritual experience called gnana yajna.

- There are some people who believe in pranayama, the control of the breath. That is another type of sacrifice, provided they do not for some special powers etc. but with the idea of realizing God through the control of the mind.
- Then, some people do the sacrifice with the control of the food (niyatha ahara – नियत आहार). They take a vow to consume a limited amount food a limited number of times (once or twice a day), and never deviate their whole lives from that.

These are only twelve examples of how we can convert any activity of ours into sacrifice. And we can extend this idea through one or two examples. One day, Sri Ramakrishna sat down for eating food, and he was surrounded by some eight or nine items. A lady devotee was serving, and in her mind, this wicked thought had come. Wicked thoughts should not enter the minds of devotees, especially when serving sadhus, or offering to Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother etc. Usually, we don't think wicked thoughts about them, not because we are ashamed to do so, because we are frightened of them – if they get angry, we will lose everything! The devotees, when they are feeding the Swamis, if they see some Swami liking a particular dish, and see him eating it again and again, there is a chance that a doubt will come into the mind of the devotee: *Swami is okay, but he is greedy! He is eating greedily and he should have better control than people like us!* If the devotee is feeding the sadhu

with that kind of mentality, then not only that person not get good results, but on the other hand, he will go down spiritually.

Once you decided to entertain some sadhu, how should you treat him? *Mathru devo bhava, pitru devo bhava, acharya devo bhava, athithi devo bhava, sadhu devo bhava, daridra devo bhava, rogi devo bhava* (मातृ देवो भव। पितृ देवो भव। आचार्य देवो भव। अतिथि देवो भव। साधु देवो भव। दरिद्र देवो भव।) – that should be attitude. These are the mantras coined by Swami Vivekananda: daridra Narayana, deena Narayana, etc. They are Narayanas (*Shivagnane jeevasewa*). So this devotee was watching. Sri Ramakrishna was about to eat, but this wicked thought, unenlightened thought, undesirable thought, entered into the mind of the lady devotee, that Sri Ramakrishna likes to enjoy, not understanding where his mind was, and a few things have happened. In one incident, he took the food in his hand, and was about to put it into his mouth, suddenly the lady saw a snake came out of his mouth and snatched the food and went back. Sri Ramakrishna was looking smilingly, and the devotee understood that Sri Ramakrishna was not eating, but offering the yajna to the fire within him. What is that fire called? Vaishvanara Agni (वैश्वानर अग्नि), as explained the verse 14 of Chapter 15:

**अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।
प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥ 14॥**

*aham vaiśhvānaro bhūtvā prāṇināṁ deham āśhritaḥ
prāṇāpāna-samāyuktaḥ pachāmy annam chatur-vidham*

As the fire Vaishvanara I enter into the bodies of all living creatures, and mingling with the upward and downward breaths, I digest the four kinds of food.

Another time, one of the monastic disciples was also entertaining such a thought. Then Sri Ramakrishna told him: *Look, the natural tendency of my mind is to merge itself in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. The moment I let the mind go, it will go straight and merge into Nirvikalpa Samadhi, which means it is very difficult for such a mind to come down and do any good to the world. Therefore, I cherish a lot of desires, I want to eat this sukta, this pickle, that food, and with the help of those desires like hooks, I try to keep my mind down.*

If you remember the example of the Holy Mother, after Sri Ramakrishna's passing away, the Holy Mother felt: such a holy person has departed, what is the point of my living in this world? And one day, when she was thinking like that, when she had the vision of a baby girl, trying to crawl, and crying, with nobody to take care of her. The Holy Mother saw, in a vision, Sri Ramakrishna commanding her to take of the baby, and saying that she will keep her mind down. This was Radhu, the Holy Mother's youngest brother's (Abhay Charan's) daughter. When he passed away, his wife (Surabala) became mad, and after some months she gave birth to this girl, Radhu.

One day the mother (Surabala) was walking, and her daughter (Radhu) was following, crying, but the mother was not caring for her. The Holy Mother saw this scene, ran and picked up the baby, and then Sri Ramakrishna again appeared and said: *This is that baby, you hold on to her. With the help of this baby your mind will come down.*

We can also remember that in the last days of Holy Mother, when she was withdrawing her mind, Sharat Maharaj told the attendants of the Holy Mother to bring Radhu's son to the Holy Mother, and see if by that the mind of the Holy Mother can remain on this earth. When they did that, the Holy Mother said very harshly, I have removed my attachment from this group. Throw her out. Tell Radhu

that I don't like to see her, or any one of her children. Let them go to Jayarambati. When Sharat Maharaj heard it, he exclaimed, there is no way to keep Mother alive now, as she has withdrawn her mind. Thereby we learn two lessons. The first lesson is, the Holy Mother was not at all attached to anybody, which many people are apt to think that she was extremely attached to Radhu and her baby. Secondly, she only took the help of Radhu, who is part of the Yoga Maya, so that her mind can remain on the level like ours, so that she can also uplift all of us. These are divine mysteries, so in the fourth chapter, as we have seen earlier:

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥ १॥

*janma karma cha me divyam evam yo veti tattvatah
tyaktva deham punar janma naiti mam eti so 'rjuna*

Whosoever knows, in the true light, My divine birth and action will not be born again when he leaves his body; he will attain Me, O Arjuna.

In other words, My birth, My activities, My going away from this world, everything is shrouded in a divine mystery. And he who praised Me only he understand by My grace, and a devotee who understands it, also understands his own birth, his own activities are also a divine mystery. Such a person is completely freed from samsara, and he will become liberated, and he will never again to come back to this world. Before we conclude this, we have to recollect that the whole life has to be converted into a *yajna*.

Life means activity. Life goes through three types of activities, undergone by all living creatures, especially human beings: the waking, the dream, and the deep sleep. Whatever happens in these three states, is an activity. Every activity requires these five elements: the doer, the object, and that which is being done, the action of doing it, and the result that is obtained from this. We need to replace the subject, object, the offering, the activity, and the result with the idea that, Brahman is the object, Brahman is the offering, Brahman is the act of offering, Brahman is the result.

If we can somehow – through, long spiritual practice – connect these five with God, then such a person attains to the ultimate knowledge that *everything is God, I am also God, and there is nothing but Brahman*. And to elaborate this idea of sacrifice, Bhagawan Krishna gives us twelve examples. And again these are just a few examples, and any activity can be converted into a sacrifice, including the activity of getting angry, the activity of killing people, the activity of doing what the world calls an abominable, cruel act, provided it is done as a sacrifice for the good of the world, and with the greatest love. For example, Arjuna was asked to fight. Indirectly what it means, you kill as many as possible, and that would be greatest sacrifice, and through that you will liberation, but only if you do it as a sacrifice, or *yajna*, unto God.

In how many ways we can concert our activites into this, we have to think about the activities we are doing. For example, we are getting up early in the morning, brushing our teeth, taking tea or breakfast, going to the office, interacting with colleagues or bosses, coming back home, and probably entertain ourselves, eat food again, and go to sleep.

From waking to going to sleep, and from birth to death, if we can convert every activity – converting means relating it to God, and saying that only God is doing through this instrumentality, I am absent – that becomes the highest spiritual practice called *yajna*. Through that *yajna*, I will become liberated. Whatever *sadhana*, whatever religion or yoga people follow, ultimately it all boils down to

this idea, everything is a yajna, sacrifice, by God, in God, to God, and everything is God. We will briefly explore the other twelve things because we have understood the essential points, and then we will proceed further in our next class.

Shanti Patha:

ॐ वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम्
देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ॥ १ ॥

Vasudeva sutham devam, Kamsa Chanura mardanam,
Devaki paramanandam, Krishnam vande jagat gurum

I worship Lord Krishna, Who is the spiritual master of the universe, who is the son of Vasudeva, who is the Lord, who killed Kamsa and Chanura, and who is the bliss of Devaki.