

# Chinmaya Smrithi



A Bi-Monthly News Magazine of the Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC)

Volume 27, Number 3, May 2017



Swamiji feeding mother goose at Chinmayam

## Calendar and Upcoming Events

### Upcoming Events

- June 26 – July 21 – Summer Camp at Chinmayam
- July 22 – 27 Jnana Yagna and Retreat with Mukhya Swami Swaroopananda at Chinmaya Somnath.
- July 31<sup>st</sup> – Aug 18<sup>th</sup> – Summer camp at Chinmaya Somnath
- July 31<sup>st</sup> – Aug 11<sup>th</sup> – Summer Camp at Frederick
- July 24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> – Youth Camp with Mukhya Swami Swaroopananda and Acharya Vivekji at Chinmaya Somnath
- July 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> – 2017 CHYK DC Registration
- July 29<sup>th</sup> – Aug 3<sup>rd</sup> – Chinmaya Mahasamadhi Camp, Chicago, IL – Isavasya Upanishad and Bhagavad Gita

### Study Groups

- Please contact Sri Kishore Bala ji by email at [kishorebk@hotmail.com](mailto:kishorebk@hotmail.com), if you are interested in forming or learning more about study groups.

### Bookstore/Library

- Browse Books, CDs, DVDs, etc. online at [www.chinmayapublications.com](http://www.chinmayapublications.com). Contact Sevak to order (Vijay Singh at Chinmayam, Subbarao Kari at Chinmaya Somnath and Bijay Dash at Frederick)

### Next Edition of Chinmaya Smrithi

- Articles for the next regular bi-monthly edition – July 2017, are due by June 30, 2017
- Email submissions to [smrithi-editor@chinmayadc.org](mailto:smrithi-editor@chinmayadc.org).
- Browse Past editions at [www.chinmayadc.org/Smrithi/Smrithi.htm](http://www.chinmayadc.org/Smrithi/Smrithi.htm)

### Useful Links:

Central Chinmaya Mission Trust [www.chinmayamission.com](http://www.chinmayamission.com)

Chinmaya Mission West [www.chinmayamission.org](http://www.chinmayamission.org)

Chinmaya International Foundation, E-Vedanta Courses [www.chinfo.org](http://www.chinfo.org)

Chinmayam Chapter – Silver Spring MD website <http://chinmayam.chinmayadc.org/chinmayam-chapter/>

Chinmaya Somnath Chapter – Chantilly VA website [www.chinmayasomnath.org](http://www.chinmayasomnath.org)

Chinmaya Frederick Chapter – Urbana MD website <http://www.frederick.cmwrc.org/>

Chinmaya Richmond Chapter – Richmond VA website [www.chinmayarichmond.org](http://www.chinmayarichmond.org)

CMWRC – Washington Regional Center [www.chinmayadc.org](http://www.chinmayadc.org)

### Please Note

***The opinions expressed here are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of Chinmaya Mission or CMWRC***

### Editorial Staff: ([smrithi-editor@chinmayadc.org](mailto:smrithi-editor@chinmayadc.org))

*Advisers: Sri Raju Chidambaram, Acharya Vilasiniji, Pujya Swami Dheeranandaji.*

*Sitaram Kowtha, Kodanate Lakshmanan,*

*BV students – Nishant Carr, Siri Neerchal, Ananya Krishnan, Usha Konduri, Thara Konduri, Dakshesh Nimishe, Varsha Krishnan, Himavarsha Yerraguntla, Vishnu Lakshmanan, Bhavya Devarsu and Bhuvan Devarsu*

*Please contact us if you are interested in joining the editorial staff!*

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## News

### CM-LAP Fund Raiser

Our CHYK members Lakshmi and Aks gave a melodious concert Bhajan Sandhya to raise funds for the Chinmaya Mission Land Acquisition Project at Chinmayam, Silver Spring on May 13<sup>th</sup>.

### Tilak Ceremony

The students graduating from Balavihar after completing their Chinmayam class were given a fond farewell and offered words of wisdom and best wishes during the annual Tilak ceremony. Students graduating from all three local chapters (Chinmayam, Frederick and Chinmaya Somnath) attended the ceremony on May 20<sup>th</sup> at Chinmayam, Silver Spring along with their friends and family. On this occasion, the graduates were anointed with the traditional Tilak by Swamiji. More details about the ceremony, photographs as well as information about the graduating class are available in a separate special Smrithi edition available online.

### Acharya Sadananadaji Camp

The annual Memorial day camp was conducted by Acharya Sadananadaji on May 27<sup>th</sup>. The topic this year was “How to be always Happy” based on the text Panchadasi.

### Gurudev's birthday

Poojya Gurudev's 101<sup>st</sup> birthday was celebrated at all the local chapters. At Chinmaya Somnath, Gurudev's Paduka Pooja was performed with the Ashtothara Naamavali chanting led by various Balavihar children and the chanting of selected Geeta verses. Geeta chanting competition winners were also awarded trophies at the Chinmaya Somnath chapter on this day. At Chinmayam, members enthusiastically participated in Seva Day activities on Sunday May 7<sup>th</sup> and helped clean up the facilities at Silverspring. After a busy day, all the

volunteers enjoyed a treat of ice cream. See pictures in the pages inside.

### Hanuman Chalisathon

Several CHYK members from the CMWRC chapter participated in the Hanuman Chalisathon held on April 29<sup>th</sup>. The event spanned nearly eight hours of continuous recitation of Hanuman Chalisa in various meters.

### Tyagaraja Aradhana

The Sri Tyagaraja and Sr Purandara Dasa Aradhana music festival was conducted by the Frederick chapter on March 28, 2015 at Urbana Middle School. The day long music festival featured musical performances by many local artistes including several Balavihar children and a concert by Sukanya Chandru accompanied by several noted local artistes.

CHINMAYA MISSION WASHINGTON REGIONAL CENTER

# JNANA YAJNA

July 22- 27, 2017

Chinmaya Somnath Auditorium

4350 Blue Spring Dr.

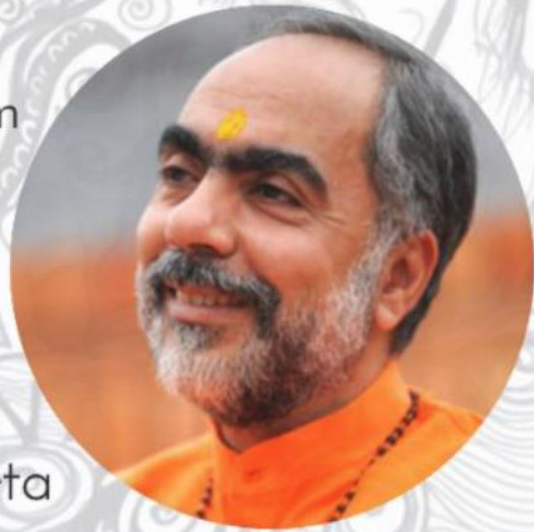
Chantilly, VA 20151

Gayatri Mantra &  
Chapter 4, Bhagavad Geeta

by

MUKHYA SWAMI SWAROOPANANDA

GLOBAL HEAD, CHINMAYA MISSION WORLDWIDE





## SUMMER CAMP

This year's theme:

**SWAMI VIVEKANANDA  
ARISE! AWAKE!**

Conducted by  
Swami Dheerananda ji

with Acharyas

For rising 1st to 8th graders  
as of September 1st, 2017



Registration will open sometime  
between mid Jan to mid Feb, 2017

Check website for information

<http://cmwrc.chinmayadc.org/summercamp>

Chinmayam, Silver  
Spring MD

**June 26<sup>th</sup> – July 21<sup>st</sup>,  
2017**

~ \* ~

Chinmaya Frederick,  
MD

**July 31<sup>st</sup> – August 11<sup>th</sup>  
, 2017**

~ \* ~

Chinmaya Somnath,  
Chantilly, VA

**July 31<sup>st</sup> – August 18<sup>th</sup>,  
2017**





## Chinmaya Mahasamadhi Aradhana Camp 2017

The Legend continues, as...

### Parallels Through Infinity

Insights into Iśāvāsya Upaniṣad and the Bhagavad Gītā as reflected in the life of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda



Hosted by Chinmaya Mission Chicago  
July 29 - August 3, 2017



Attend Chinmaya Aradhana Family Camp at Chicago

Website Link: <http://www.mychinmaya.org/msc/index.php?id=home>

Inspirational Satsangs with Acharyas



*Association with sages leads one to liberation. Such association should therefore be cherished. Along with the practice of self enquiry, such association is more potent than any other spiritual discipline. – Bhagwan Ramana Maharishi*

At this camp you will find an inspiring array of spiritual teachers who are easily approachable and very welcoming to anyone who comes to them for spiritual guidance or even just a friendly chat. Each Acharya is unique and every one of them is deeply knowledgeable and extremely endearing. On each day of the camp there will be small group sessions with several different Acharyas on various topics such as parenting, householder life, managing stress, managing wealth, etc. This would be an ideal forum to get all those questions in your mind clarified and listen to their valuable views and advice in a personalized setting.

**Swami Shantananda (Princeton , NJ)**



Swami Shantananda is the Acharya of Chinmaya Mission New Jersey, and senior-most Acharya in the United States. His talks are infused with humor and wonderful insights into life and people. Swamiji will be conducting Guided Meditation from verses of Nirvanashatkam. He will also be conducting other special workshops (Adult Study Groups, Balavihar Teachers Training, Graceful Aging for Seniors and Devi Group)

**Swami Ishwarananda (Los Angeles, CA)**



Swami Ishwarananda is the resident Acharya of Chinmaya Mission Los Angeles. He is known for his dynamic speaking style and immense depth of knowledge.

**Swami Sharanananda (Chicago, IL)**



Swami Sharanananda is the resident Acharya of Chinmaya Mission Chicago. His joyful exuberance and enthusiasm is contagious and uplifting to all that come in contact with him. He will be conducting Yoga and youth camp.



CMWRC JCHYK Presents

# GREATER CONFIDENCE

*In One's Self, In One's Faith*



A residential retreat for youth (Rising 9th- College Freshmen) under the guidance of Acharya Vivek ji. With classes conducted by Pujya Swami Swaroopanandaji & Swami Dheeranandaji.

JULY 24TH- 28TH, 2017  
CHINMAYA SOMNATH

Registration & Details: <http://tinyurl.com/jchykddccamp2017>





CHINMAYA MISSION WASHINGTON REGIONAL CENTER

presents

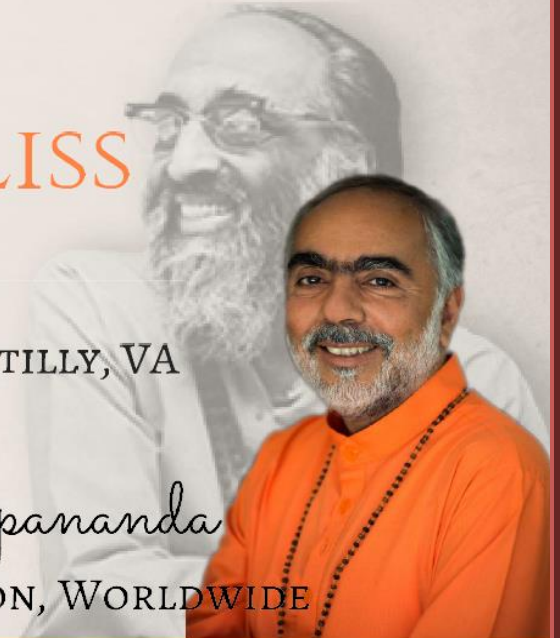
*a week of*  
**SPIRITUAL BLISS**

JULY 22- 27, 2017

CHINMAYA SOMNATH

4350 BLUE SPRING DRIVE, CHANTILLY, VA

*inspired by*  
*Pujya Swami Swaroopananda*  
GLOBAL HEAD OF CHINMAYA MISSION, WORLDWIDE



## GAYATRI MANTRA FAMILY RETREAT | JULY 22- 23

Delve into the depths of this sacred mantra and transform your life. With classes for children, youth and adults, this retreat is the perfect weekend vacation.

**Registration required. Full day weekend program.**

## JNANA YAJNA | JULY 24- 27, 7.30- 9.00PM

Discover Lord Krishna's divine message to Arjuna. Learn the essence of the famous verse 'Yada yada hi dharmasya...' Contemplate on the Lord's exemplification of Jnana, Karma and Sanyasa in His Avatar. **Free event, open to all.**

## JCHYK, YOUTH RETREAT | JULY 24- 28

A residential spiritual retreat for rising 9th graders through rising college freshmen. Explore 'Greater Confidence in One's Self and One's Faith,' A week of dynamism, personal growth and community await. **Registration required. Full day program.**

## CHYK, YOUNG ADULT RETREAT | JULY 21-23

Find 'Peace in Restless World' through Vedantik teachings. Learn how to develop a calm, objective attitude towards the ever-changing world.

**Registration required. Full day program.**

**WWW.CHINMAYADC.ORG**



**TARA CULTURAL TRUST**  
**SANDEEPANY SADHANALAYA, POWAI**



Organizes

**NAISHKARMYASIDDHI Part - I CAMP**  
**(In English)**

*Starting on Auspicious Guru Poornima Day on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2017*

*And*

*Culminating with Shiva Sahasranama Archana on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2017*

**Timing: 7:00 am to 8:00 am**  
**4:30 pm to 5:30 pm**

*At Saraswati Nilaya, Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Powai, Mumbai*

*By*

**Pujya Swami Bodhatmanandaji**

**Camp Highlights**

- Vedic Chanting
- Easy Sanskrit Lessons
- Stotrams
- Satsang with Acharyas
- Visit to Chinmaya Pradeep



For more details & registration contact Email Id [tct@chinmayamission.com](mailto:tct@chinmayamission.com)  
or Phone No: - +91-022-28570368/2427/5805. Tara Cultural Trust,  
Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Chinmaya Mission, Saki Vihar Road, Powai, Mumbai  
400072.



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- Chinmaya Udghosh - magazine for youth - appropriate for 13-30 year olds subscription link: [http://www.chinmayamission.com/our-magazines/chinmaya-udghosh/#.WE\\_MBPrJhE](http://www.chinmayamission.com/our-magazines/chinmaya-udghosh/#.WE_MBPrJhE)



## Geeta Chanting Competition Reflections

**Editor's Note:** The following are submissions from the "Writing" category of the 2017 Geeta Chanting Competition (Chapter 3 – Karma Yoga – The Art of Action: Verses 1-21). We have reflections from across all age groups ranging from Balavihar students and youth to adults. The contributors selected one or more verses for reflection and drew upon the literal meaning as well as commentary by Poojya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda as well as other sources. In the following pages, you will see write-ups by:

Sitaram Kowtha  
Kalpana Panigrahi  
Vishnupriya Krishna  
Suren Nathan  
Padmaja Emani  
Sudiksha Nimishe  
Dakshesh Nimishe  
Rohan Nigam  
Shruthi Venkatachari  
Amit Mukherjee  
Vidya Sridhar  
Rima Sheth  
Srinivas Adhinarayanan  
Navya Mohan  
Karan Luthria  
Anjali Tangirala  
Roma Sheth  
Vandana Bapna  
Mehul Sachdev  
Krithi Sriram  
Srikanth Kowtha  
Neetu Gupta  
Radha Kowtha  
Sanyogeeta Sawant  
Neeti Gandhi  
Shabaritha Meda Ramalingam  
Shilpa Nistane  
Keshav Kowtha  
Sujatha Kannan.

### Geeta Verse 3-10

The Sun, the flowers and the river are often cited as exemplars of performance of duty in a spirit of selfless dedicated service. Sunlight shines equally on everyone without making a judgment on who deserves its grace, and without expecting anything in return. The flowers, in following their biological cycle of its parent (tree or plant) radiate freshness, fragrance and color primarily to attract bees and butterflies, but in doing so, they spread joy and happiness all around. The river happily flows from its source at some higher elevations to its destination, the sea. In its purposeful journey to reach the sea, it falls, meanders, gushes, gently flows, narrows in some places, widens in others. In so doing, it provides freshness, nourishment and beauty to plants and beings along its way.

In creating Man, the creator advised us to serve in a cooperative, selfless dedicated manner. In this we will find our prosperity through which our desires will be fulfilled. Through sahayajna, we can create our own Kamadhuk (the mystical cow that fulfills all desires).

A way of looking at this verse is that we are embraced by the sahayajna of nature, because of which all our needs (as opposed to wants) are continuously met. If we take a moment to look at our basic needs and how they are provided for either by nature or by those around us, we can only be filled with an attitude of gratitude and a sense of obligation to do our part in the larger equation. Our role in the bigger picture is to act to be able to meet others' needs – an act of nature. Thus, our actions become a yajna to join hands with everything and everyone around us to do our part cheerfully. Thus, it is then up to us to honor and fulfil our own duty in the best way possible, in a cooperative spirit, and we will become that flower, that river, that Sun. Thus, we will be in tune with nature – that of giving, and where we are both benefactors and consumers of nature's plenty.

Many years ago, when Swami Dheeranandaji was teaching Chapter 3 of the Geeta, and particularly this verse, he used the example of NASA's Apollo program - how many people of varied backgrounds and skills dedicated themselves to a singular purpose. Their sahayajna led to 'Man on the Moon', an accomplishment that was cherished the world over. The strength of Chinmaya Mission worldwide today is founded on the sahayajna of many sevaks who saw the light of

Gurudev's message "Maximum Happiness to Maximum People for Maximum Time". May each of us undertake our own duties wholeheartedly and serve in a sahayajna spirit with those around us. With this we will become one with nature and be in the service of everyone and everything around us.

By Sitaram Kowtha

#### Geeta Verse 3-17 to 3-19

I understand that from the moment life takes form and enters the world of plurality, it is engaged in Action at all times. Thus, one can confidently proclaim that Action is the hallmark of life. This body is propelled into Action in directions determined by the workings of a combination of mind and intellect, resulting from existing vasanas. Then, I wonder what is Karma Yoga? Yoga literally means the Union. In my mind, Yoga is the key word, as it has to be understood in terms of the union of the individual consciousness to the higher, Brahman. In the context of Karma Yoga, when the two words "Karma" and "Yoga" join, the implication becomes extraordinary.

Karma Yoga, simply put, is the art of performing God-dedicated selfless Actions in a spirit of utmost devotion. As long as this body is able, there is no other option but to Act. The nature and attitude of our Actions determine our spiritual growth. Karma Yoga guides us to not get attached to our Actions but to take them up exclusively as designated tasks to accomplish, following the rules of Dharma and regarding them as a service to the Divine. Karma Yoga also directs us to indulge in Actions with purity in intention, in a spirit of complete surrender and absolute love. The practical interpretation would be to entertain Actions that are unavoidable and execute them without attachments. This approach immediately frees an individual from associating with the outcomes of his/her Actions and takes him/her out of the cycle of sorrow and happiness. Such a strategy surely helps progression in our journey to exhaust existing vasanas and simultaneously avoid creating new ones.

One's prime endeavor is to strive to develop and maintain the attitude of detachment. This effort is required at multiple levels. The most important of all is to cultivate detachment from identification with the body, which we all commonly perceive as "Ego." It is imperative to understand that this body is devoid of any capacity to function by itself and is able to perform only by virtue of the consciousness present in it. At the same time, consciousness, the True Self, is the state of

Desireless-ness, Thoughtless-ness and Actionless-ness, as well as the Supreme Bliss. One who is cognizant of the above facts revels in contentment at all times and does not engage in Actions for the sake of gaining ephemeral happiness.

Once we realize that the sensory pleasures in this world of objects are transient in nature and come out of the shell of the ego, we are then able to visualize our true nature. This appears to be a crystal-clear goal; however, the vision to be able to view it does not come easy to a seeker. Nevertheless, to the Realized one, living life is akin to emulating the lotus leaf untouched by water, and Karma Yoga is a stepping-stone in reaching that destination!

by Kalpana Panigrahi

#### Geeta Verse (multiple)

Hari Om,

The blessed lord said:

In this World there is a twofold path, the "Path of knowledge" of the Sankhyans and the "Path of action" of the Yogins. (3-3)

Not by nonperformance of actions, does man reach "actionlessness" nor by mere renunciation does he attain "perfection" (3-4)

But, whosoever, controlling the senses by the mind, O Arjuna, engages his organs of action in KARMA YOGA, without attachment, he excels (3-7)

The world is bound by actions other than those performed "for the sake of sacrifice" do thou, therefore, O Son of Kunti, perform action for that sake (Yajna) alone, free from all attachments. (3-9)

Therefore, always perform actions which should be done, without attachment; for, by performing action without attachment, man attains the Supreme. (3-19)

Whatever a great man does, other men imitate, whatever he sets up as the standard, that the world follows. (3-21)

These are the stanzas that resonate with me. I consider myself a person of action. (I have often wondered if I am hyperactive.) These stanzas provide me with the framework for the way I should act to find joy and peace in this moment and to work towards "Amritathwam" or "Jivanmoksha".

Sri Krishna, succinctly explains to Arjuna the “Spiritual Law of Action” in these Stanzas. The Law itself I believe is Stanza 9. Ordinary men (and women) are bound to Samsara because of attachment to Ego. Their actions are all done to satisfy the demands of their Ego, therefore, attachment and suffering is inevitable. Once we start performing our bounden duty in a spirit of nonattachment and sacrifice we are on a path to liberating ourselves from the attachment to this BMI. Yaj, also means worship. This reminds me of what I often heard my father say “Manava sevaye Madhava seva”. So, in a spirit of worship to Madhava(Lord Krishna) perform actions towards Manava (humans, but could also mean all living things). When work is done with this attitude, we are able to liberate ourselves from the fruits of those actions, exercise control over our minds, free ourselves from material entanglements, truly enjoy our work and lead by example. Two great public persona who come to my mind as Karma Yogis are Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa. They have been immortalized by their actions!

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti

Harihi Om, Sri Gurubhyonamaha Harihi Om.

By Vishnupriya Krishna

## Leadership lessons from the Gita

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् ।  
जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन् ॥  
26॥

*na buddhi-bhedaṁ janayed ajñānām karma-  
saṅginām  
joṣhayet sarva-karmāṇi vidvān yuktaḥ  
samācharan*

This is one of the signature verses in Chapter 3 of the Gita on leadership that I have come to understand and appreciate better over time.

We all are acutely aware that we should work or perform actions to earn a living, be successful and live our lives. However, Lord Krishna states that all work should be performed in a Karma Yoga spirit which is to sport an attitude that basically offers all actions to the

Lord and accepts whatever the results of the action as a gift. This is not easy because we are mostly results driven and our emotions swing wildly based on the outcome of our actions. Furthermore, since our mind is always fixated on the result, we continue to work diligently with the unfortunate belief that we will get the right result that will deliver us ultimate happiness. The act of performing the work itself should deliver happiness since we should be unaffected by the result.

A learned one who understands this should not condemn others or lecture them on the virtues of Karma Yoga, since this may cause confusion in the minds of people which would lead them to reject the teaching or and cause them to abandon work. A classic example of this confusion is to cite desire to be the root cause of all evil and therefore abandon all ambition and drive. Another confused behavior is to read the Gita, attend a few lectures and assume that one is highly spiritual and therefore begin to look down on or lecture others. The real learned one or a Jnani should live his or her life adhering to the principles of Karma Yoga with extra vigor working side by side with those who are ignorant. This is the true definition of leadership.

This principle is very much true at home and at work or in any environment we interact. If are to expect change in children, it does not make sense to reprimand them on their behavior while we exhibit the very same behavior. If we would like children to eat right and exercise, we should first eat right and exercise so they see and learn from us. If we expect a team member or a coworker to be punctual, we need to show them by being punctual.

Why is this so difficult to follow? We always find the blemish or fault in others, without looking at ourselves. We expect change in everyone and everything but ourselves and this is the true definition of hypocrisy. This verse reiterates the importance of leading by example. Do not ask others to cheer up, but be cheerful always. Do not ask others to work hard, but show them what hard work is. Do not preach meditation and benefits or chanting to others, but instead meditate and chant. Leadership is all about exuding the qualities we expect to see in others to achieve a collective common goal that benefits one and all.

By Suren Nathan

Bhagavad Geeta

Chapter 3: Karma Yoga



Arjuna Said: O Kesava, O Janardhana why do you want me to engage in the path of this terrible warfare if knowledge is far more superior to action. I am so confused by the equivocal instructions which are given by you. Can you please explain me clearly which path is really beneficial to me the path of action or the path of knowledge?

Bhagavan said: There are two classes of men who try for self-realization. Some want to understand the self through philosophical studies and others by devotional service. One cannot attain freedom from giving up one's duties or attain perfection through renunciation. No one can refrain from action even for a moment. One who refrains from bodily action but whose mind dwells on sense objects is called a pretender. But a person who sincerely tries to control his senses and begins karma yoga (Krishna consciousness) without attachment is far more superior. Performing one's own prescribed duties as described and defined in religious scriptures is better than not working and which also keeps the physical body fit.

O Kaunteya: Performing all your duties as a sacrifice to Vishnu will always set you free from bondage. In the beginning of creation, the Lord of all creatures sent forth generations of men and demi gods, along with sacrifices for Vishnu, and blessed them by saying "Everyone be happy by yagna sacrifice" because its performance will bestow upon you everything, desirable for living happily and achieving liberation. When the demi gods are pleased by sacrifices done by the men, cooperation between men and demigods exists and prosperity will reign for all. By offering sacrifices to the demigods all the necessities of the men are attained. But he who enjoys all without sacrifice is called as a thief.

All those devotees of God who offer food as sacrifice are released from sin but all those people who eat food for personal sense enjoyment merely eat sin.

All Living bodies sustain on food grains, which are produced from grains. Rains are obtained by performance of yagna, yagna is born from prescribed duties. Vedas define the regulations to be followed by the men. And Vedas are born from the supreme God. All virtue lies in the acts of sacrifice.

My Dear Arjuna: All humans must follow the cycle of sacrifice established by the Vedas in order to avoid the sinful life. Living only for the satisfaction of the senses, such a person lives in vain. The ultimate goal of everyone must be self-realization. For one who is immersed in self-

realization there is no other duty. Working without attachment to fruits of activities, he attains the supreme. King Janaka attained perfection merely by performing the prescribed duties. For the sake of educating people you must work.

Whatever action great men perform, everyone else follow. Whatever standards great men sets by virtuous acts all the world pursues.

Thus, this explains the first 21 verses of Karma Yoga (chapter 3) of the Bhagavat Gita.

Hari OM. Hari OM. Hari OM.

By Padmaja Emani

Hari Om

Gita Chapter 3, verse 9

Yajnarthat karmanonyatra lokoyam karmabandhanah I

Tadartham karma kaunteya muktasangassamacara II 9 II

Reflections:

This chapter is mostly talking about yajna and Karmayoga. What is yajna? Yajna is when one works with the attitude of worship (to the Lord) sacrificing comforts, offering talents, working efficiently without selfish intentions and desires, without likes and dislikes, without the expectations of recognition, reward and respect and without the anxiety for the results of action; actions done for general good of many - all this is Yajna. What is Karmayoga? The act of doing something in the yajna spirit as described earlier without egocentric desires is Karmayoga. In Karma-yoga the mind is tranquil even while performing the actions. When the actions are done in the spirit of worship (arpana buddhi) accepting the result as they come (prasad buddhi) is – Karma-yoga.

In this verse, Shri Krishna asks Arjuna to perform actions for the sake of yajna, in the yajna spirit because only that frees one from the bondage/attachment accrued by any actions. We are ever free, but due to our erroneous thinking we bind ourselves. We need to hence understand what actions are and why some actions bind and some don't. All actions are a result of a desire that prompts agitations/disturbances in the mind to which the body reacts by performing actions. Only some of those actions are ever done selflessly for the sake of the general good of the people/masses, with right attitude

and with right intentions. Only such actions that are performed for the sake of yajna, for a higher cause, done selflessly, are the actions which do not bind one with the result or an expectation. For example, when parents take care of their infant children or a sick child they do not expect the child to acknowledge them by saying thank you. We can think of this body as a machine which is programmed by God. It is placed in the situation, in the capacity to do what it could. Then the work done by this body will be a duty, worship to the God. There is no attachment and no selfishness. If we get benefitted that is the Prasad. It is said that while doing our duty we should not expect reward, recognition or even respect. If that comes then we should accept that as a Prasad, if it doesn't we were never working for that! So such work which is done without any expectations and I-ness and my-ness (egocentric desires) does not bind one into vasanas. They help with vasana kshaya. In contrast when one does actions with expectation they only tie themselves more into this vasana cycle. Even while volunteering, care needs to be taken to not get trapped in the likes and dislikes as that only binds. Accept what may come and what can be done by us and let go of what work does not need us anymore, let someone else with talents work on it, one should not insist. Detachment in the actions is also a key to not get bound by actions. If we could remember that in our professional lives, the work will be transformed. If there is anxiety and insistence on a certain result in the work then we have not applied the principle of Karmayoga completely. But when the work gives us peace of mind and joy then we know that we remembered to work in the yajna spirit.

By Sudiksha Nimishe

**Hari Om**

### **Reflection on Gita verses, Chapter 3, Vs 8 and 9.**

"You perform your bounden duty; for, action is superior to inaction. Even the maintenance of the body could not be possible for you by inaction."

"The world is bound by actions other than those performed for the sake of sacrifice. Do thou, therefore, O son of Kunti, perform action for that sake alone, free from all attachments."

3.8 and 3.9

These two verses of the Gita are a very good summary of the main idea of the Bhagvad Gita. The entire Gita consists of Krishna trying to tell Arjuna about how he needs to fulfill his duties and fight the war against his opposing evil family members. In the beginning, Arjuna is choosing inaction over action, but Krishna must convince him not to.

Desires have the power to break someone entirely. When desires take over a person, they can completely destroy the person's abilities to do anything. They can be so hung up on achieving that desire that it can act like a drug, which can be terrible. These desires, known as vasanas, have to be kept in check. That's why we encourage the practice of selfless dedicated service, or seva. In verse 9, Krishna urges Arjuna to act not for himself but for the good of society, making a sacrifice, in a way that it's for the people.

If you shovel snow, that's a good act of selfless service that'll help your community and parents. But if you do it just so that your parents can be happy and give you some benefits, that's a different story, because in that scenario you're doing it for selfish reasons. Really, you can't honestly tell an average person to give up all their desires, that's just not possible. Desires are both what makes us who we are and can break who we are. The idea is to just keep it all in check.

When talking about these two verses with my mom, I asked her, "What difference do I make to the community?" The truth is, I didn't really think I made much of a difference to most people, certainly not as much of a difference as my parents do. This scenario then reminded my mom and I about *It's a Wonderful Life*, where the main character sees life as if he wasn't born. In this alternate reality, his family and friends are all radically different, and the character does end up seeing that his life really is significant. I think the same can be said about my life. Sure, I didn't do nearly as many things as the main character in that movie did, but I'm simply not that old yet. I think sometime in the future, I could do a lot.

However, because I set a good example for people, don't do bad things like drugs or drinking while driving, or any other illegal activities, I still end up helping the community. Had I done any of these bad practices, I would surely end up hurting someone, most likely myself. Sometimes we don't see the small contributions each of us make, and I think that's what this verse is really about. It's about the small things each of us do, like washing the dishes, taking out the trash, or

helping a friend when they're down. These are the selfless acts that one needs to focus on and we need more of these kinds of selflessness.

In conclusion, these Gita verses tell us what we all should know that inaction is bad, and we must do actions for the good of people with no attachments or desires. However, we must use this knowledge and apply it in our lives.

By Dakshesh Nimishe

### Writing (Reflection)

#### **Srimad Bhagavad Geeta**

##### **Chapter 3, verse 12**

This verse from the Srimad Bhagavad Gita reflects on the importance of giving back to the Devas. The Devas provide us with the necessities that we need for life. For example, the Devas provide us with rain, wind, fertilization, crops, and minerals. All of this is given to us because these celestial Gods want us to do good with them. We are indebted to them for this. We often take this for granted. However, the Devas are expecting that we return them with good deeds and service of the divine Lord. Everything belongs to God. Therefore, if we do not acknowledge their realm over this then, we are committing theft. We could create products using the resources provided by God and improve the society that we live in. God wants to create a stable environment and if we use His gifts to help achieve that, then we are doing a service to God. Therefore, we would return the favor that God showered upon us.

If we ask a friend for money because we are going through a tough time, that friend gave us money because they want to help improve our condition, not spend it on unnecessary goods. If we spend the money on things that we need, our friend would feel that the money he provided was put to good use. If we had used it on unnecessary items we would have committed thievery because we did not use the money as it was intended to use. This all goes back to returning the favor to God. He created this world for our pleasure and we can return the favor by making it a better place. We all enjoy the perks provided by God however, not many people are willing to provide something in return. In the context of this verse, self-centeredness is the equivalent of thievery. We do not have anything that God does not have. All we can do is nurture this creation and display our admiration for God.

By Rohan Nigam

##### **Chapter 3, Verse 14**

Karma Yoga is one of the paths to realization which involves selfless service- without expecting anything in return. This is particularly difficult for many individuals, including myself. For example, while doing chores, most people carry through in order to get a monetary return, unlike Karma Yogis. In the Bhagavad Gita, verse 14 of chapter 3 translates to, "from food come forth beings; from rain food is produced; from sacrifice arises rain, and sacrifice is born of action". My interpretation of this verse is that living things depend on some form of food, and food comes from water, or rain. Rain comes from sacrifice, yajna, and service. If there was no sacrifice or selfless service, the wonderful world we know would be nonexistent. As humans, it is easy to take things for granted, such as the food we eat, the books we read, and even the body we are given, but it would not have been possible without a sacrifice someone made. Karma Yoga and dharma are very closely intertwined. Verse 19 states, "Therefore, always perform actions without attachment, for, by doing this, man attains the Supreme." This describes Dharma, our duty. It is what makes the world go around and without it, there is utter chaos. We must do our duty wholeheartedly, even without receiving anything in return, whether it is cooking, volunteering, or simply taking out the trash. Even when we come to Chinmaya Mission, instead of complaining why we must wake up, we can look to it as an opportunity to learn our culture. As we grow up and become educated citizens of the world, we should contribute to our family, neighborhood, and society. What we should take away from this chapter, is that we do Karma for the well-being of the world. Karma is our dharma. It should be done without expecting anything in return.

By Shruthi Venkatachari

##### **The Path of Karma**

I have to admit that this Bhagwat Geeta Chapter of Karma Yoga is the closest to my heart amongst the few chapters I have had exposure to. From the outset, as Arjuna looks for an escape route to not have to deal with a conflict with his loved ones, the first verse sets the tone to define what really constitutes Karma Yoga. Arjuna attempts to portray Krishna's divine advice as one filled with inherent conflict.

In the previous chapter, Lord Krishna talks about Sankhya Yoga and how walking the path of the



knowledge, one can get rid of one's desires and ultimately be one with the Brahman. Arjun uses the Lord's words to question the wisdom of action when in the path of knowledge there exists an ultimate path to salvation, especially when that path is filled with grief, pain and sorrow. What amazes me most about this part about Lord Krishna is that he does not get angry at being questioned even though He is the Lord of the three worlds. Too often as parents, when we attempt to imbibe good values in our children, we get frustrated when we are questioned about the integrity of the thoughts and virtues we are attempting to inculcate as it applies to their daily life.

Demonstrating true love for his disciple and friend, He goes on to say to his Parth that the paths of knowledge and action are NOT conflicting but in fact complimentary. He affectionately goes on to explain that Arjuna being the Kshatriya that he is, the path of knowledge would not be the right one as it belongs to individuals who are meditative and contemplative in nature. The path of selfless action would be the right one for an active individual like him and that it is this path which will lead him to freedom from his desires that we strive for.

Another couple of verses that really hit home are verses seven and nine of this chapter. The message is that our actions should be driven by the dual attributes of selflessness and sacrifice. Quite often in our Daily Lives, we work extremely hard. We work hard at our homes taking care of our children, spouses and parents. We work hard at work for much longer hours on our time critical projects. We work hard and undertake community service endeavors. And we end up feeling a sense of vanity at being able to 'accomplish' so much. It is this vasana laden thought that these verses are trying to target and eradicate.

Both these verses indicate that we should go about our tasks because a) they are our responsibility and we enjoy doing them and b) when we put our heart and soul into doing these efforts, the results of those beautiful endeavors are themselves the reward for us to enjoy. So rather than looking outward for adulation which would enhance our vasanas and massage our ego, we are being encouraged to look inward and cleanse us of our intoxication for gratification. Should we take this approach, rest assured the Lord ensures us that we will attain the highest good.

- Amit Mukherjee

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

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

**Literal Translation:**

*The world is bound by actions other than those performed 'for the sake of sacrifice'; do thou, therefore, O son of Kunti, perform action for that sake (for YAJNA) alone, free from all attachments.*

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।  
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥ १०॥

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

**Literal Translation:**

*The PRAJAPATI (the Creator), having in the beginning (of creation) created mankind together with sacrifices, said, "by this shall you prosper; let this be the milch cow of your desire-KAMADHUK" (the mythological cow which yields all desired objects).*

**Reflection:**

In the ninth verse, Lord Krishna asks Arjuna to perform his earthy duties well with *yagna* spirit. Whenever a duty is performed thus, it is carried out with an attitude of worship or as an offering to God without any expectations. Any duty that is performed with spirit of cooperation and good will be beneficial to all instead of just being self-serving. This intention elevates the actions performed to the ideal form of doing a karma. By adopting this attitude, we are removing our attachment to the results of our actions, whether they are good or bad. Thus, we can concentrate on performing the duty at hand well rather than being in a state of constant anxiety about the outcome of our actions. This also embodies

the practice of living in the now or the present rather than dwelling in the future.

In the tenth verse, Krishna says the Creator created various manifestation of life with goals and duties and set them forth with the advice to perform them well with selfless dedication, which He then promised will bring great results for the mankind. We see this selfless service in action in nature – the sun, moon and the star shine without any self-motivation and the myriad life forms on earth also carry on with same spirit. Selfless actions bring joy to such a performer of duties. His life of sacrifice slowly begins to bear fruits of enlightenment, which may be the ultimate desire of such a seeker. This verse subtly underlines the power of surrender and letting the divine take the lead. The act of surrender to God, invokes the universal law of being in His Grace, which then fulfills all the desires or wishes of the selfless performer of actions. This granting of wishes is then compared to the Kamadhenu - the mythical cow of Sage Vashistha that fulfilled all desires of whoever that asked of it.

In conclusion, we can say that that any action performed with dedication and selflessly with spirit of sharing can help mankind achieve heights of personal and societal progress and advancement. This has been repeatedly borne out in history when leaders like Gandhi worked and won freedom of not only millions in Indian subcontinent, but also inspired leaders like Mandela and Martin Luther King who then went on to work to bring freedom and equality in their own countries. This helped usher an era of progress and achievement unparalleled in history of mankind that continues till the present day.

By Vidya Sridhar

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Bhagavad Gita 3.20-3.21

“By performing their prescribed duties, King Janak and others attained perfection. You should also perform your work to set an example for the good of the world. Whatever actions great persons perform, common people follow. Whatever standards they set, all the world pursues.”

This verse explains that doing one's duties will help him achieve perfection. Having moral values is essential to attaining excellence. Once it is attained, one will be liberated from the cycle of life and death. Performing the good actions that you were taught, will, over millions of years, help you attain Moksha. This verse also shows that setting good examples helps motivate and inspire people to follow. To elaborate,

parents are one of the most common people that are looked upon as leaders. Children look up to their parents and if their mother or father does something good, the child will most likely do the same. However, a negative example of this is the Catholic Priests abusing young kids. They are supposed to be spiritual leaders who inspire people to do good but instead they set terrible examples for the common people. Therefore, always doing good things and performing the virtuous values you were taught is critical for setting good examples and attaining Moksha.

By Rima Sheth

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### To act or Not to act? That is the Question.

What a great Guru Lord Krishna is! A beginner such as myself feels encouraged by seeing that in the presence of such a great Master, earnest Arjuna is able to expose his confusions which are inevitable when one traverses any new conceptual territory. **Pujya Gurudev** once mentioned that “Any intelligent, rational man is an atheist. Until, of course he is initiated into religion”. One does not start out as a believer, though good faith is desirable, but active and healthy inquiry is what results in clarification, as we see in Arjuna who keeps pushing his nebulous intuition with the help of a willing elucidator. In particular, the content of this chapter must have been very evasive for those people having a strong intellectual bent. For them the path of knowledge seems superior, and they may look down upon activity - choosing inaction over action. In the beginning verses in this chapter, Krishna clearly acknowledges that both Knowledge and Action are valid paths; and clarifies that even the path of Knowledge cannot be devoid of action. And in the later verses, the wonderful chain of events surrounding our universe is laid out: Prajapati, out of sacrifice created the world; the not so sacrificial actions born out of this original act, binds the world. However, within such a tangle, the sacrificial actions towards Devas nourish them and flow back as goods such as rain, which results in food and hence nourishes humanity - it seems sacrifice is such a win-win proposition. A realized person, not bound by action and hence not attached to them, is at an optimal condition to view and act objectively tuned to the situation. When we look at this big picture, we are able to appreciate the universal nature of this binding law of actions - encouraging us to move towards non-attachment and a mindset to serve - verily the **Yajna Spirit**. What if such a path of action is theoretically possible, but practically infeasible? Though it is wonderful to be a trailblazer and a pioneer of new territories, Arjuna's situation may not permit such an

experimentation - so, Krishna assures him that it has been tried and tested by people such as King Janaka; so once again, by putting all the cards out in the open, it is easy for Arjuna to use his own rationality, which is the faculty that has put forth such questions in the first place, to arrive at the desired solution for the problem at hand. And such a great person, is not motivated in a similar fashion such as ourselves, as he seems to be beyond the binding nature of the actions - how does such a free agent contribute to humanity? By being a role model, Lord Krishna assures, as we have a built-in tendency to follow great people. And we don't need to look any further than our own **Gurudev** for the veracity of the conclusion!

By Srinivas Adhinarayanan

In chapter three of the Geeta, a common message is that "life involves action; hence no one can refrain from action," which is very significant in my daily life, and is a very applicable verse. Every moment of every day, you are partaking in some action. By sitting, breathing, thinking, eating, sleeping, feeling, doing, working, and hoping, you are taking action. It is impossible to refrain from taking action, as in doing so is an action itself. Being alive involves many actions, so all people are always acting. The Geeta brilliantly explains this, and it is very easy to apply to your decision making, so as to make yourself a more intelligent action taker. If everything you do is an action, and inaction does not exist, you must not ignore problems, but rather face them head on. Make the most logical action which benefits both yourself and others, and is morally correct, knowing that by being alive it is your duty to take correct actions. In my life, if peer pressure is ever present, I remember that I can either succumb to it, taking the cowardly action, or stand for what I believe in, doing the action that I know is correct, based on my moral values, which I know because of the Geeta. – Navya Mohan

#### Interpretation of Chapter 3 Verse 9

Every second of our daily lives, we are constantly acting, whether it be sleeping, studying, playing. We are unable to be "actionless" and thereby, at all times, there are consequences, good or bad, of our current state of action. The majority of actions are all dedicated to ourselves, hoping for some eventual material return. These material attachments are embedded within ourselves, and until one starts to learn perform actions 'for the sake of sacrifice' can one finally remove the bonding to material short term pleasures and gains, and achieve true spirituality.

Material attachment, from wanting the latest Xbox Game, to wanting to eat that cake on the counter, are what influence our daily actions, in the short and long term. We are constantly told by our parents that we need to get good grades so we can get a good job that will pay us well. We are trained from a young age to do this, to do that, all for the purpose of getting money when we grow older, to do things for yourself. However, with this attitude we will soon be growing more and more attached to material objects, and will have all our happiness and joy in life dependent on a never-ending line of material wants. However, within this verse, Lord Krishna informs Arjuna, there is a way out of this life of short term joy, dependent on material things, by doing actions for selfless purposes without any return.

When we do actions for the benefit of others, we start to see our material attachments disappear. This bondage that ties one to all these material objects in life starts to tear away, and we start to see true long term joy arise for us sacrificing time, effort, materials etc. to causes other than ourselves. We start to look at the world as a figment of the Lord, and betterment in oneself will arise from this dedication to the Lord and willingness to sacrifice. In fact, it is this sacrificial service, also known as yagna, that will liberate oneself, and will help us on the path to divine success.

Action is unavoidable at all times, and it is important to keep in mind that action is neither good or bad by itself, but it is the performer of the action that determines its state. Action can either lead to additional and eventually never ending material attachment if the performer performs for his own selfish needs, or this action could lead to liberation, on the path to spiritual success, if one performs it for the selfless purposes without expecting any return.

Thank You!

By Karan Luthria

Chapter 3 of the Bhagavad Gita is called "Karma Yoga". This means "connecting to the Supreme through action". Just before this in the previous chapter, the last 18 slokas are about "sthita prajna lakshana". This means "qualities of a person of steady wisdom". Since these two chapters come one after the other, they must be related. Wisdom is connected to action because you need to have knowledge of right and wrong first, to be able to choose and do the right actions.



My favorite slokas in chapter 3 are slokas 14 and 15. Sloka 14 is about the circle of life. The first line is “annat bhavanti bhutani”, which means “from food comes forth beings”. The second line is “parjanyaat anna sambhavah”, which means “from rain, food is produced”. The third line is “yajñaad bhavati parjanya”, which means “from sacrifice brings rain”. The last line is “yajñah karma samudbhavah”, which means “and sacrifice is born of action”. This is the literal translation of the sloka, but what does it really mean? I think this sloka is about the idea that you are what you eat, since the first line says that the food that you eat becomes you. Knowing this, I think we should all try to eat healthy, organic food that comes from a peel and not a plastic wrapper. Underlying our body is our mind and our intellect. This is also fueled by the food we eat. We know oily foods make us feel lethargic and sugary foods make us hyper. Fresh foods keep us balanced. This state helps us learn good things, become knowledgeable and intelligent. In short, it supports spiritual growth.

My other favorite sloka is sloka 15. This sloka says that ordinary action is connected to the ultimate Supreme one. So, it is true that there is always someone watching. We should eat healthy, fresh food for helping inward development as well, not just for the physical benefits. This does not only apply to food. We should always do the right thing, even if we need to choose to stand alone. This sloka shows that action is not disconnected. We cannot think nobody is watching because someone is always watching and standing with us - and that is God. (:

By Anjali Tangirala

The Sixth Verse in Chapter Three of the Bhagavad Gita says, “He who, restraining the organs-of-action, sits thinking in his mind of the sense-objects, he, of deluded understanding, is called a hypocrite.”

It is important to comprehend that we cannot live without undergoing any type of action; an actionless state simply does not exist. It may be argued that someone could lay down without moving, however, it escapes them that laying down is also considered an action. This verse depicts someone who may attempt at avoiding physical action, but fails to realize that his mind is continuously wandering to diverse places, pondering over past events, or generating plans for the future. He tries to meditate, but his mind is everywhere. This is why he is coined a hypocrite. It has already been established that action is completely unavoidable. So, Krishna

explains that if complete purity and control over the mind is unattainable, and that lack of action is not feasible, then one should seek to perform the virtuous type of physical action. The following quote, Verse Seven, exists as an elaboration of this concept:

“But, whosoever, controlling the senses by the mind, O Arjuna, engages his organs-of-action in Karma Yoga, without attachment, he excels.” (III:7)

To fully comprehend this verse, it is essential to understand the meaning of Karma Yoga. Karma Yoga is based off of a benign action that lacks selfishness and egotistical thoughts or intentions. This action must be performed with the utmost desire to benefit another person. An ultimate conclusion that regards these circumstances is that this particular action must be derived from love, or divine affection. As human beings, it can be difficult to perceive which actions are the correct ones for us to carry out. There are several different sense objects, and it is important to know which ones to enjoy or avoid. To illustrate, if someone is evidently allergic to peanuts, he does not need to give up food as a whole, but only any product containing nuts. Choosing which actions to carry out is an essential part of Karma Yoga.

Another aspect is that the action must be performed skillfully. You could argue that someone who robs a bank performs skillfully, however, this action ultimately does not benefit the bank, but only the person himself. A further concept that Krishna explains to Arjuna in this verse, is to act without attachments. As human beings, it is extremely difficult to disengage ourselves from attachments. We hold onto people and objects that we are close too, and if they are removed from our lives, it is hard to compose ourselves. But once you can release from attachments, choose which actions will benefit others and yourself, and act skillfully, you are one step closer to becoming a Karma Yogi.

By Roma Sheth

न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नेष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।  
न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥ ४ ॥

*Not by non-performance of actions does man reach 'actionlessness'; nor by mere renunciation does he attain 'Perfection'.*

This verse explains that there is more to attaining 'Perfection' or Self-realization than blindly giving up

actions/duties/responsibilities or renouncing/running away from the world. Attaining 'Perfection' requires instilling and inculcating faith, devotion, knowledge of the Self and the resultant transformation as seen through the integration of subtle but deep import and the right attitude in the man of 'Perfection' while navigating through life.

No one can live without performing actions even for a moment; even during deep sleep the organs of breathing, heart, digestion etc. are constantly in action. However, BMI functions are reflections of the deeply ingrained vasanas and the prevalent gunas in each individual. Non-performance of actions refers to not identifying oneself with body-mind-intellect (BMI), but as the Sat-Chit-Ananda, the pure Consciousness. If one is not the BMI, one cannot become the doer of the actions performed by BMI either and thus one becomes 'actionless'. A man of 'perfection' is fully aware of this and is just a witness to the functions of BMI, without the sense of doership, without any insistence on the relentless ego-centered desire gratifications of the BMI in order to experience peace and contentment. They live and breathe peace and joy under any and all internal or external circumstances ... due to detachment of identification with BMI.

As a simile, how can the breakdown of a car (BMI) destroy/break the driver (pure consciousness, the Self)? Every car will have a finite life and will break down with wear and tear even with utmost care and maintenance by the driver. The driver knows that he can purchase another car, or repair/repaint the car. Why should the driver worry or get disturbed incessantly? The 'driver' is not the 'car'. 'I' am not the 'BMI'! Such a person becomes the vehicle of Universal Will. His/her BMI is fully engaged in action in all their roles but without any urges for desire gratification due to exhausted vasanas ('*renunciation*' of expectation of fruits of action as well as the ego based perception of doership of actions of BMI, by BMI, for BMI – thus, '*actionlessness*')

Verse 4 of Karma Yoga -Chapter 3 of Bhagavad Geeta seems like a twister – renunciation/actionlessness while simultaneously engaging in actions 100 percent in the outer world! But, it has deep wisdom hidden about the fine art of dynamically and joyfully acting in the world with the peaceful attitude of a worldly renunciate...do your best and leave the rest!

By Vandana Bapna

Chapter three, verse twenty-one, and the last verse I could write about, but also the verse that resonates with me more than any other verse in this specific chapter. In my family, I have a brother seven and a half years younger than me. This is a large age gap, and we hold a very unique relationship. It is not quite a stereotypical brotherly relationship where, the younger one follows the older brother around, but it is not a relationship where the younger brother is steadfast to his older brother and obeys everything he says. But over the years I have learned that if I do something that is perceived in a positive way by my parents, then only, my brother will do what I say or copy my actions. This is an example of the central idea of verse twenty-one taking place.

The meaning of this verse, is "Whatever a great man does, that other men also do (imitate); whatever he sets up as the standard that the world (people) follows". I applied this to my family, essentially as "leading by example". Every leader or mentor does this for their pupil, whether it be one's parent, coach, or teacher, this is an effective method of teaching in all fields. The meaning can also be applied in history. Think Gandhi Ji, and how his principle of non-violence influenced not just other Indians, it influenced leaders like Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela, and Cesar Chavez. Now you see non-violent protest everywhere, as it is now considered the standard for speaking against something in the most democratic (democracy) way. Gandhi Ji did something, which other people imitated, and he set something as a standard, that now the whole world follows.

What I gain from this verse, that I never had thought of before is, how much effect one action has, not just for you, but for your overall environment.

By Mehul Sachdev

During the battle between the Pandavas and the Kauravas in the Mahabarata, the Pandava Arjuna loses his will to fight when he realizes that to win the war, he will have to kill his relatives and teachers. He asks Krishna to take him to the mountains so that he can meditate and become a yogi. However, Krishna orders Arjuna to fight in the battle. Arjuna questions the command because he believed that knowledge, which is what he wants to achieve by becoming a yogi, is superior to action, which in this scenario would be fighting in the battle. Confused, he asks Krishna to tell him the one correct way to achieve Perfection or Moksha. Krishna explains how, in the world, there is a two-fold path: the Path of Knowledge and the Path of Action. One cannot

achieve “actionlessness” by the non-performance of action because, in truth, it is human nature to act, nor can one achieve “Perfection” by renunciation. A hypocrite is one who restrains his “organs-of-action”, or those organs necessary to interact with the material world such as hands and feet, to think of “sense-objects” or senses. Senses are responsible for our cravings, and keep us bound to the mortal world as they create attachments. But, the one that excels is the one who controls his senses by his mind and engages his organs-of-actions in the discipline of selfless action as a way to perfection, without any attachments. Growing up in India, many of us are constantly bombarded with lessons and advice on how to be a “good” Hindu. However, there are many examples of Hindu practices that contradict what Krishna tells Arjuna in the Gita. For example, we are taught that renunciation is an important aspect when it comes to being a “good” Hindu. A form of renunciation that many people in India take part in is fasting. Many people take time off their work and education to take part in fasts because the hunger and fatigue that they feel during fasts prevents them from concentrating on their work and doing their jobs well. Some people even fall sick during fasts. Fasting interferes with the maintenance of the organs of action, as food is necessary to ensure that our organs function properly. Our senses during fasting become more severe because of the deprivation of food. Our taste buds salivate and our noses tingle when we encounter food during a fast. We develop an attachment to food because we are deprived of it. The intensity of the attachment makes it difficult for us to keep our minds focused and calm. Many claim fasting is an effective method to connect with God, claiming that not consuming food gives them more time to focus on praying and developing a relationship with God, but how is fasting a justified method of renunciation when it impairs our organs of action and increases the intensity of our senses? As Krishna states in the Gita, one cannot attain Moksha when their senses are more tuned than their organs of action.

By Krithi Sriram

### The Wheel of Action

Lord Krishna describes the wheel of action: that food creates being, rain creates food, sacrifice creates rain, and action is the root of sacrifice. As Lord Krishna has earlier stated that a being must always be performing action, this is a closed loop. We know in a literal sense that yajnas do not cause precipitation; however, in *The Art of Manmaking*, Gurudev defines yajnas (sacrifice) as

the necessary precondition in the hearts of the people. Pairing action with that precondition, we can create success in the field of endeavor – the rain that turns seeds into crops. Those crops then sustain the body and therefore allow the next action.

In verse 15, Lord Krishna then connects action to Brahma the Creator and sacrifice to Brahman the all-pervading. Karma, action, is due only to the creator. Action is merely a part of creation – we act because the body, mind, and intellect exist and therefore must act. Our true nature, Brahman, is centered in sacrifice – we expose our true nature when we remove our attachments and ego and act out of selflessness. Therefore, when we follow the wheel of action, we move closer towards Brahman because we are centering our actions in sacrifice. When we do not follow the wheel of action, when attachments and ego drive our actions, we move further away from Brahman.

To better understand the metaphor that Lord Krishna presents, I have tried to connect to this concept in a form that I more regularly run into – a group presentation. In grad school, I am a part of a yearlong design team that requires us to present as a group in a variety of settings – technical, investor, customer, etc. Overall, our goal is to create a medical device that solves a problem and can potentially become a start-up. The most important lesson we learned as a group is that when we work together selflessly we succeed.

The importance of this selfless work becomes clear when framed as a part of the wheel of action. In the overall goal of a successful presentation, the act of writing the slides is the Karma. Here, there is a choice in the intent of writing the slides. We can inculcate the Yajna spirit as a group to write this presentation, or we can throw together a low effort power point that technically gets the points across but lacks cohesion or care. By choosing to work together, setting aside personal ego and focusing on the overarching goal of sharing our ideas and getting the right feedback, we create that ‘necessary precondition’ that Gurudev describes is the rain. With that yajna spirit, the only result can be a successful presentation that showcases the depth of our preparation and enthusiasm as a group. In sacrificing to make the group more cohesive, we follow the wheel of action and therefore can succeed in our endeavor.

By Srikanth Kowtha

4) Not by non-performance of actions does man reach "Actionlessness" nor by mere renunciation does he attain 'Perfection'.

7) But, whosoever, controlling the sense by the mind, O Arjuna, engages his organs-of-action in KARMA YOGA, without attachment, he excels.

In chapter 3 Lord Shri Krishna talks about how one can attain HIM through the KARMA YOGA.

This verse resonates with me because in day to day life we desire for the 'Perfection', but, the worldly mind thinks that only by renouncing the duties thy can achieve it. It's not the duties that needs to be renounced but it's the vasanas like Kaam, Krodha that needs to be renounced from our life to attain (shudhi) purity of the mind to understand the Brahman and be part of it. That will ultimately lead to perfection. A true Brahman is the one who performs the worldly actions without being attached to it. To do so, the Jeeva needs to practice to control the Indriyas (Vasanas). One should perform the worldly duties as oneself and doesn't need to pretend to be someone else. In Karma Yoga, Lord Shri Krishna say's that, for me the being is close to my heart who performs his worldly duties honestly and put his heart in it then the pretentious being, who harbor Vasanas that are unlike his pretense.

Hari OM.

By Neetu Gupta

Hari Om!

The word "Sacrifice" in Chapter 3 of Bhagvad Geeta fascinated me the most, as I reflected on the verses and Sri Gurudev's commentary. Lord Krishna explains that when actions are performed in a spirit of sacrifice, those actions will not bind us, that is, when actions are done with selfless dedicated service (Yajna Spirit) will help us in exhausting our Vasanas and do not accumulate more Vasanas from those actions.

When we do simple daily chores as a member of a family, as a parent, as an employee, as a member of a community, in the Yajna Spirit; actions for the benefit of everyone around us, and especially when we do it in a cooperative manner with Saha-Yajna spirit, the satisfaction that we experience, and the peace and happiness are the results of "Sacrifice".

Lord Krishna in the WHEEL OF ACTION verses concludes saying that "The all-pervading BRAHMAN rests in Sacrifice". I think this is a powerful declaration. And

probably the most misinterpreted statement. Thanks to our Guru Parampara for the correct explanation. The BRAHMAN in us (in each one of us), the eternal peace and happiness is realized from the sacrifice we do. What we are sacrificing here is our EGO. We can Sacrifice our EGO only when we perform our duties as Selfless Dedicated Service in a Cooperative Manner. Thus, by performing actions and sacrificing ego, we gain peace and happiness.

By Radha Kowtha

Reading and reflecting these verses has been truly inspirational and helped me in understanding what acting in the spirit of karma yoga means. Although all the verses are connected, beginning with Arjuna's question on Jnana yoga versus Karma yoga, I am choosing to write on Verse 4 and verse 19.

न कर्मणामनारम्भात्

na kar-ma-nām-anā-ram-bhāt

नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।

naiṣ-karm-yaṁ pu-ru-ṣo's-nu-te ।

न च संन्यसनादेव

na ca san-nya-sa-nā-de-va

सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥ ३-४ ॥

sid-dhiṁ sa-ma-dhi-gac-cha-ti ॥ 3-4 ॥

*Not by non-performance of actions does man reach 'actionlessness'; nor by mere renunciation does he attain 'Perfection'.*

At first, reading this was confusing and a number of questions arose in my mind – what even is 'actionlessness'? Does it mean giving up actions? In the next line itself, Lord Krishna says renouncing all actions is not the way either!

To understand this, one has to understand the genesis of action. Desires prompt all actions. These desires are the manifest form of our inherent tendencies or vasanas for various pleasures and objects enjoyed or suffered by us. Thus, actions are prompted by desires which stem from false notions or ignorance.

All actions of body (walking etc.), senses (hearing etc.) and mind (thinking, feeling) are signs of life so a total state of inaction is impossible when living.

Performing actions feverishly or being a workaholic only exhausts us and does not lead us to Knowledge of the Self.



The state of Actionlessness (naishkarmya) is neither a state of action nor inaction of the body, senses or mind. It is that state of knowledge that happiness is not in objects but in the Self. Realization of this makes us desireless and is therefore called actionlessness-naishkarmya.

In a nutshell, neither a lazy or escapist person nor the workaholic person can gain spiritual enlightenment.

How can one then gain this knowledge while performing actions in this world? This is the theme of the next few verses.

The right actions done with the right attitude prepare us to gain this state of knowledge.

तस्मादसक्तस्ततं	tas-mād-a-sak-tas-sa-ta-tam
कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।	kār-yam kar-ma sa-mā-ca-ra ।
असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म	a-sak-to hyā-ca-ran-kar-ma
परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥ ३-१९ ॥	pa-ra-māp-no-ti pū-ru-ṣaḥ ॥ 3-19 ॥

Therefore, always perform actions which should be done, without attachment; for, by

Performing action without attachment, man attains the Supreme.

In this verse Lord Krishna summarizes the spirit of karma yoga by saying that always perform actions and duties which must be performed without attachment and actions thus performed lead to the Supreme.

Attachments are characterized by likes or dislikes and therefore affect how we perceive things and also make us anxious, dependent and drain our energy and affect our performance. If we perform all our actions and duties in the attitude of yajna spirit and accept all results with cheerfulness or as the Lord's 'prasada' then we are following the path of karma yoga. Walking the path of karma-yoga in our daily lives will prepare us for jnana-yoga. Implementing both with better understanding will take us closer to the goal of attaining the Supreme.

On a personal level studying these verses and attempting to put it into practice in my life has helped me when faced with conflicts between choices or duties at home and work. I find myself complaining less about duties which are undesirable and more accepting of the results of my actions.

By Sanyogeeta Sawant

We all believe that 'I am doer of all my actions and experiencer of all my actions', but the shastra says that you are akarta, abhokta, suddha buddha mukta satchitananda swaroopa atma. To understand what Bhagavan is telling us in Shrimad Bhagavad Gita through Arjuna, we need preparation in form of purification of the mind. Purification of mind comes only through the karma yoga.

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन । मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

karmany-evādhikāras te mā phaleṣhu kadāchana, mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr mā te saṅgo'stvakarmaṇi.

We need to do your obligatory duties (nitya karma) as offering to God. By becoming the instrument of the Lord, we give up our karta bhava (I am doer). It is like becoming Krishna's flute, so instead of I am doing everything for me, I do everything on his command, I am sevak of the Lord. As a result, purification of mind happens and one can see oneself different from body, mind and intellect. Arjuna thought that there are two paths for the Self-knowledge path of action (karma yoga) and path of knowledge (jnana yoga) but Bhagavan says that there is only one path, Karma yoga is first stage, Jnana yoga is the second stage for realization.

Jnana yoga is for those who have purification of mind, equanimity of mind, dispassion towards the objects of the world. Unless one is prepared one cannot abide in the teachings. Jnana yoga is like the freeway; once you practice and prepare yourself, you take the freeway but when you begin driving first, you have to go through the traffic lights and perfect your driving before you can go to the freeway. Taking local roads is doing karma yoga and preparing oneself for jnana yoga.

Arjuna thinks that how can I attain actionless (Atma) through performance of action?

न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते । न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ।।

na karmaṇām anārambhān naiṣkarmyam puruṣo'ṣhnute, na cha sannyasanād eva siddhiṁ samadhi-gachchhati .

Not initiating any action does not mean naishkarmya. Naishkarmya means attaining nirvana (liberation). One with naishkarmya bhava - total abidance in the Self will have total identification with Atma which is actionless. When one identify with the physical body, he will consider qualities of body as mine. Identification with

Atma can happen only when one renounces the desires and so does not perform actions prompted by desires. So actionlessness actually means desirelessness. It does not mean physically not doing any actions but abiding in the state of desirelessness. We generally do all actions prompted by desires and we act to enjoy the fruit of actions thus we create impressions and that in turn create vasanas. Vasanas prompt us to do more actions and it is cyclic in nature action. It continues until one develops desirelessness. One who has developed desirelessness performs action, it is called naishkarmya because he is established in the Atma, which is actionless. One who has realized the Self does not desire for any objective pleasure. For a realized person vasana kshaya happens, no vasanas, no desires and no desire prompted actions. Renunciation of the world will result into liberation if there is no knowledge. Renunciation of action should be out of vairagya and it should lead to jnana prapti (getting knowledge) that would result into liberation. So for us, when we reduce our desires and vasanas through purification of mind, the natural outcome is progressing in our sadhana.

By Neeti Gandhi

Arjuna is in an impatient rush to know which path to take to lead an ideal life of a true yogi. Often in life, we look for quick fixes. We think that by reading self-help books or consulting a learned person, we will be able to fix our problems. But sadly, we go through these books and pay high consultation fees and even understand and agree with the ideas expressed, but we often fail to follow through them. Lord Krishna here very well understands this nature of a human being who revels in his sensual pleasures. He knows that each human has to go through certain experiences in order to feel inspired to follow the right path. Thus, instead of Jnana marga he suggests the path of Karma Yoga to Arjuna.

Lord Krishna says that the only way to attain a life of perfection is by reducing our ego to a zero. This can be done by doing Karma (actions) with a sense of detachment (Vairagya) to the fruit of our actions. This path is the most arduous one since most of us are attached to the fruit of our actions. Many misunderstand detachment as giving up one's duties and following a path of inaction. But Krishna reminds in the verse-8 that it is impossible to live without performing action. Even the very act of thinking good or bad thoughts adds up as karma. Hence a person who thinks that he is living a life of a sanyasi in a cave, but still entertains thoughts that revel in sensual objects is nothing but a charlatan. Krishna suggests that not only should we detach

ourselves from the fruit of action while performing action, we should also offer all the fruit of our action to God to sublimate our ego.

**Why consecration (yagna)?** How does it help? More agitation is caused in mind in anticipation of fruits of karma. When we consecrate our actions, the agitation caused due to anticipation is less and as a result more energy and focus is available to complete the action chosen. This will result in more satisfaction in our work. When we dedicate the fruit of action back to the Supreme Being, we need not worry about the happiness lasting forever or worry about how to get more of the same. When there is less agitation in mind due to less desires, it helps us remain as happiness itself - our true nature as opposed to creating more desire for happiness. This way we will be able to enjoy the journey that we take while doing the action as opposed to half-heartedly doing something that makes the work harder and that too for some imaginary result at the end that may or may not be what we desired in the first place.

#### **What type of Karma should we perform?**

At first one should do actions suitable to one's own nature. Just like when for a theatrical play the director selects actors for different roles according to the capability and talent of each participant. The goal of each actor in the play is the same – to have a successful show. In the Mahabharata too, Krishna advises Arjuna to wage war against his own. But Krishna did not pick Balarama to wage war; instead he planned it in such a way that the war started when Balarama was on a pilgrimage. Balarama was stronger than a herd of elephants and had killed many demons too and he was much stronger than Arjuna. But Balarama did not want a war and did not want to pick sides; it was not in his nature. Krishna needed someone who could rise above right and wrong, friend and foe and wage war for the greater good.

Second, we should find a guide or a guru to lead us on the right path. Presence of a Guru in our life is very important to understand what type of actions to perform. A guru will be able to gently guide and lovingly explain why it is important to perform only those actions that reduces duality that we feel in this world and removes the sense of mine and yours. For example, a disciple may feel that he can consecrate the fruits of bad karma too and need not worry about the bitter fruit of the bad karma coming back to him. But under the guidance of a guru, he will realize the importance and true meaning of non-duality. When you realize that the

whole universe functions as one unit and we are a part of it and whatever actions we do has a consequence, the tendency to choose wrong actions reduces. For example, when you realize that you are not breathing just because of your own lungs but also because there are several external environmental factors that produce oxygen enabling our body to breath in oxygen with the help of healthy lungs. Once we realize this the only karma to choose is to be environmentally friendly and do everything we can to preserve our ecosystem.

### Krishna the perfect Guru for Arjuna:

Krishna knows the universal truth of oneness but very well understands that Arjuna's intellect is not ripe enough to grasp it in its entirety; therefore in verse 11 He says that by performing everything with yagna bhava he will be able to please the respective demigod and they will shower their blessings on him. At the same time in Verse 12 he reminds Arjuna to share his blessings of abundance received from all the demigods/devathas and only take what is left just enough to nourish his body. As anything more than that would be equivalent to collecting sins.

In conclusion, I think everyone needs a Guru who can help his disciple realize that God, Guru and disciple are all but one. There is no short cut to realize this. Everyone has to undergo certain experiences in life according to their prarabdha and perform actions to the best of their ability and consecrate the fruit of action to the higher power (Yagna). By doing so, slowly but surely one will be able to stop performing desire prompted actions and live a pure selfless life and be a source of inspiration for many.

In my opinion Krishna is the greatest management guru. He guided Arjuna and transformed the warrior prince into a fearless warrior fighting for the greater good of his kingdom.

By Shabaritha Meda Ramalingam

Geeta Chapter 3 Verse 9:

In this verse, Shri Krishna tells Arjuna about what kind of action to perform. He says O'Arjuna, all actions performed for other than Yajna, bind one to the world.

Here Lord Krishna, compares Yajna to an act. In a Yajna we dedicate a Yajna to a deity or devta, and offer oblations in the fire, while chanting mantras. And while doing all this there is no selfish motive. Similarly, our acts should be free of all selfish motives. Any acts which are bounding to world, would bring nothing but sorrow.

There can be a lot of real life situations to relate to this example. One of them can be easily related to today's corporate world. An employee, should only work towards delivering what his job demands, and work towards the best of the company. If the employee works with any selfish motive, which could mean anything from convenience/ease or to impress the manager, or to get a promotion, or a better hike, or rather just do everything to keep the boss happy, is like working for moving target and as we all know a moving target can never be achieved. And ultimately all such actions are bound to bring conflicts, sorrow and unhappiness. Our only aim should be to strive for the best and the right, without the thought of short term benefits.

Hence Lord Krishna says all our acts should be like Yajna, where we offer our service selflessly. Any other act is bound to bring bondage to the material world and ultimately unhappiness.

By Shilpa Nistane

In the Chinmaya Mission Pledge, we chant our intentions to live a life of "... noble sacrifice and service, producing more than what we consume, and giving more than what we take." This specific pledge is not a personal promise made by a singular member, but a community coming together to take an oath of service to one another, to "stand as one family." But a questioning student may wonder about this. They may understand the personal importance of seva, but might still ask about the importance of this communal sacrifice.

The answer to their questions lie in the third chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. In Verse 10 of Chapter 3, Lord Krishna says, "The creator (Prajapati) after having created mankind, together with yajna, said 'By this shall you create; this shall be the fulfiller of all your desires'" and in Verse 11 says, "With [yajna], you do nourish the gods and may those devas nourish you; thus nourishing one another; you shall attain the Highest Good." In these two verses, Lord Krishna, establishes the source and the benefits of yajna. A single individual, through yajna, and by seeking "...the Lord's Grace to keep us on the path of virtue, courage, and wisdom," can attain the Highest Ideal. But Lord Krishna also establishes the power of yajna by using the metaphor of the Vedic rituals of old. These rituals were events where entire towns came together to sacrifice to the Gods. Lord Krishna wanted to also impress this societal aspect of yajna.

Yajna is the gift, by which we humans can work cooperatively to reach a mutually desirable goal. The story of human progress is marked by many great examples of the Yajna Spirit bringing together groups of

people to benefit their fellow humans. Gurudev, in The Art of Man Making says, "... an intelligent community can, all by itself, striving in the yajna spirit ... [can] bring about all improvements and every conceivable progress." However, he also goes on to warn that this combined productivity can be used for both good and ill. If a higher ideal is chosen then Gurudev says we can make, "...a heaven of earth..." But as Gurudev continues with, this requires every member of the team to sacrifice his or her ego and personal desires. If this doesn't happen, then the "cooperative scheme breaks down." So, even if one approaches a team activity with sincere selflessness, if other members of the team do not approach with a similar intent, then the action cannot be successful. There is great power in the combined work, but that work can easily fall to egoism.

So, what is the solution? All of us must decide together that any action we take is effectively "in service to the Lord of Lords" and should be done with "devotion to the Supreme Self" as we pledge every week. If we all adopt this attitude, then whatever tasks we take together will become much more potent. Gurudev says that "... when man works in the yajna spirit, the outer circumstances must miraculously change their pattern to be conducive to the common will of the selfless community..."

But what happens when people take advantage of the common will, for their own selfish benefit? Firstly, Lord Krishna speaks against these people in Verses 12 and 13 of Chapter 3. Lord Krishna says, "...Indeed he who enjoys objects given by the devas, without offering in return to them, is verily a thief." In the next verse, "... but those sinful ones, who cook food only for their own sake, verily eat but sin." This condemnation, from the context of the yajnas of eras past, is targeted towards those who take more than they give, in direct contrast to the pledge we chant every Sunday. As Gurudev says in his commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, "Krishna seems to be against the principle of arrogation of wealth, and of hoarding the same, motivated by lust of lucre... It is said that such hoarders of wealth eat but sin." But, this comes at a cost. In Art of Man Making, Gurudev says that this gathering of wealth directly correlates with the gathering of negative vasanas, "which will rake up future restlessness, mental worries, regrets, and anxieties." By taking advantage of society's fruits of action for our own selfish benefit may provide materialistic pleasure, but it stunts our spiritual growth.

In summary, following the Chinmaya Mission Pledge allows us to improve ourselves as Lord Krishna

prescribed in Chapter 3 of the Bhagavad Gita. Working together, as a team, allows us humans to bring about great success and development, should we all choose to bend our egos and desires. We also can induce spiritual growth within ourselves. And, we should not worry about those who take without giving. When we "produce more than what we consume," we are actually benefiting ourselves and our fellow humans. Those who consume more than they produce are only increasing the number of negative vasanas they have. They will struggle more for it in the future. Let us focus on living the life as described in the Chinmaya Mission Pledge, in service of the Lord of Lords.

By Keshav Kowtha

Na kar-ma-nam-ana-ram-bhat nais-karmyam puru-sos-nute

Na ca samnyasana-deva siddhim samadhigacchati.

Not by performance of action does man reach 'actionlessness';

nor by mere renunciation does he attain 'Perfection

The first thing that comes to one's mind when reading this is, how can 'actionlessness' be the ultimate goal to achieve for any human being? Actionlessness here does not mean being lazy or not working. In this verse, Swami Chinmayananda explains actionlessness as not having desires. If we think further we realize that our actions are driven by our vasanas. Vasanas lead to desires which further lead to thoughts. These thoughts then manifest as actions.

Om

Causal Body -----	Ignorance---	Vasanas-----	Desires
Subtle Body-----	Mind and intellect-----	Thoughts	↓
Gross Body-----	Organs of action-----	Action	↓

Therefore, elimination of desires will lead to elimination of thoughts and hence elimination of the actions associated with these thoughts.

Action is an integral part of life and is an inevitable aspect of life. Even when laying still or sleeping all our cells and different organs in the body are constantly working. 'Actionlessness' means achieving the state of acting without any desires or thoughts related to



personal gains such as wealth or success, without a desire to change the world and irrespective of whether society condemns or commends it. The state of enjoying one's work for the sake of the work alone, without expectations regarding the fruits of the work is the path to attain Perfection. Mere renunciation of action by running away from it or non-performance of one's duties and actions, leads to regression with increase in tamas. Actions performed as 'yoga' that are dedicated to the Supreme, lead to withdrawal of the mind and intellect from its preoccupation with the senses organs. Such actions alone prime one to move up the ladder of Self-Realization.

By Sujatha Kannan

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Hanuman Chalisathon was enthusiastically conducted by CHYK members on April 29<sup>th</sup> at Chinmayam Silver Spring. The program went on from 1:30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.



In support of the CM-LAP project, a Bhajan Sandhya concert fund-raiser was held at Chinmayam on May 13<sup>th</sup>. The main artistes were Lakshmi Chandrashekar and Ashwin K Subramanian, both members of the Chinmaya family. They produced an evening of enchanting music. Following the concert, they had Bhiksha with Poojya Swamiji and Acharya Vilasiniji at Kailash Niwas.



We had a visitor ("Athithi") from Canada this spring. Mother goose has chosen Chinmayam as a nesting ground and its eggs have recently hatched. Pictured above, you find Swamiji feeding the mother goose. The patience of the mother goose (it can sit in position for many weeks at a time) is indeed remarkable.



Poojya Gurudev's birthday this year was celebrated on May 7<sup>th</sup>. Enthusiastic members helped to clean and spruce up the Chinmayam campus through Seva Day and both children and elder members later enjoyed ice cream.



## Confluence of Bhakthi and Jnana – A Divine Experience !

*Shantala Kaikini – Sevika, Chinmaya Saraswati*

As a new day, February 25, 2017 dawned at the Chinmaya Saraswati Ashram, Orange, Connecticut, the air was still permeated with the perfume of incense and camphor. The atmosphere seemed to continue to carry the reverberations of the sonorous chanting of mantras, the clanging of temple bells and cymbals of the previous



evening's Mahashivaratri Pooja. Indeed, it was as if the presence of the Divine had graced the beautiful altar and our recently installed Shiva Linga with all the beautiful invocations, and His presence was still palpable, such



was the beauty of the previous day's pooja! And to this new day, we arrived at the Ashram to partake of more delights with the pravachan of Acharya Vilasiniji, who had come to Connecticut from CMWRC especially for this occasion. It all seemed divinely ordained: beginning with a pooja spanning an entire night or Jagran solemnizing Mahashivratri followed by two pravachans explaining the powerful 'OM NAMAH SHIVAYA' mahamantra!

The Chinmaya Saraswati Ashram is a center where the focus is on combining bhakti and jnana related pursuits



for all seekers and to that end this event was the perfect confluence! Acharya Vilasiniji's first pravachan focused on the Vedantic meaning of the Shiva Prarthana (prayer), beginning with "Om Namaste Astu Bhagavan Vishweshwara..." Acharya Vilasiniji explained the beauty and power of this stotram, illustrating it with stories and anecdotes that made the entire time allotted to the pravachan seem all too short. From the formation of the Jyotirlingam, to the legend of Bhagiratha, we were enchanted with the rich plethora of divine experiences that have continued from time immemorial! As the first session drew to a close, we waited with bated breath and excitement for the next pravachan!

In the second pravachan, Acharya Vilasiniji elaborated on the Shiva Shadakshara Stotram or the six syllabic 'OM NAMAH SHIVAYA' mahamantra. As simple as it is, this mantra is one which we are all familiar with, but the power and intricacy that these syllables carry and convey, that was indeed eye-opening! Again, Vilasiniji drew on mythological stories to illustrate the mantra. In keeping with the path of meditation and reflection that Lord Shiva adhered to, there was a guided meditation session towards the end of each pravachan, set to the chanting of 'Om Namah Shivaya' by Sunita Menon and Deepa Nair; indeed, the experience was divine! We concluded the pravachan by offering flowers to the Shivalinga and then, with happy hearts, we left the ashram feeling spiritually quenched!



## Iswara Darshanam -III

### Discussion of the 11<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Geeta – Acharya Sadanandaji

The 11th Chapter of Geeta starts with Arjuna's desire to see Iswara in all His Glory. In the first two slokas, he summarizes his clear understanding of the Lord and the self. Hence the first two slokas can be considered the essence of Lord's teaching up to the 10th Chapter.

*Arjuna uvAcha:*

*madanugrahAya paramam guhyamadhyAtma  
sanjnitam |*

*yattvayOktam vachastena mOhO2yam vigatomama | |*  
11-1

madanugrahAya – to bless me, tvayA – by you, yat paramam guhyam = that which is supremely sacred and secret, adhyAtma sanjnitam – about the absolute truth, vacaH uktam – taught elaborately, and , tena - by that teaching, mama ayam mohaH – this delusion of mine, vigataH = is gone.

*bhavApyayou hi bhUtANAm shrutou vistarashO mayA |*

*tattvataH kamalapatrAsksha mAhAtmyamapi  
chAvyayam | |* 11-2

kamalpatrAksha – Oh! Lotus-leaf-eyed one, hi – indeed, mayA- by me, tattvataH – from you, BhutAnAm – of all beings (and matter), bhavApyayou – that are born, tattvataH – from you, vistarataH – elaborately, shrutou – I have listened (to the teaching). cha – and, avyayam – in destructible, mAhAtmyam – glories, api (shroutou) – also have listened.

The entire Bhagavad Geeta is considered as the explanation of the mahAvAkya, the aphoristic statement- tat tvam asi. The first 6 chapters are centered on the description of tvam padArtham, while the chapters 7-12 deals with tat padArtham and remaining six chapters deals with the –asi – the relation between the two. Shankara says this is the essence of Geeta which he calls it as samyak darshanam, seeing the oneness that pervades all. In the first sloka of the 11Ch. Arjuna summaries the essential teaching that he has gained of the first six chapters and in the second sloka he

summarizes the teaching of 7 to 10 chapters. This is from Arjuna's point.

Lord Krishna analyzed the *tvam pada vaachyaartha* and *lakshyaartha*, the direct meaning and the implied meaning in the chapters 2-6. (The first chapter is mostly the introduction of the student and his state of mind). The chapters 2-6 point out the *tvam pada lakshyaArtha* or indicatory meaning that differs from the direct usage meaning or *vAchyArtha* of *tvam*.

That *tvam* is different from the physical body, is indicated in the sloka

*dEhI nityamavadhyO2yam dEhE sarvasya bhArata |*

*tasmAt sarvANi bhUtANi na tvam shOchitu marhasi | |* 2-30

The self, which is embodied in all bodies, is eternal and indestructible, while the bodies themselves continuously undergo change and destruction; therefore there is no reason for you to cry.

In the third chapter, the self or *aatma* is pointed to be beyond or different from the *pancakoshas* or five sheaths or *Atma* is *pancakosha vilakshaNam*, yet enlivening all the *koshas* or sheaths. Hierarchy in the order of reality or importance is being pointed out in the sloka.

*indriyANi parANYAhuH indriyEbhyaH param manaH |*

*masastu parA buddhiH buddhEH paratastu saH | |* 3-42.

That *aatma*, the Self is *akarthaa* or non-doer in spite of all the doing that takes place in its mere presence is stated in Ch. 4

*karmaNyakarma yaH pasyet, akarmaNi cha karmayaH |*

*sa buddhimAn manuShyEShu sa yuktaH kRitsna  
karmakRit | |* 4-18

In the 5th chapter *Atma* or the Self is said to reside in the body with 9 gates, and it is neither a doer nor cause others to act.

*navadvArE purE dEhl naiva kurvan na kArayan| 5-13*

*naiva kinchit karOmIti yuktO manyEta tatvavit 5-8*

The wise knows that he is never a doer while all the actions are being done by *jnaanedriyas* and *karmendriyas*. In the 6th chapter it is pointed out that the *jnaani* understands that the Self is the Self in all and all is in his own Self.

*sarvabhUtastam AtmAnam sarvabhUtAni ca Atmani|*

Thus, in all the Chapters 2-6, the indicatory meaning of *tvam padartham* has been pointed out. While this is the essential part of the teaching, there are several other aspects discussed which come under *avantara vishayANI* or secondary importance. This includes Karma yoga too, since some aspects of karma yoga have been discussed in the *purva khAnDa* or *karma khAnDa*. Hence Shankara points out the jnaana yoga is the main topic of the chapters (*tatparyam*) even though karmayoga is extensively discussed, since there is no *apUrvata*, or no newness in the topic.

To be continued

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