

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 38: Chapter 4, Verses 25-29

(January 23 –January 29, 2019)

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ORIGINAL SANSKRIT DOCUMENT

TRANSLITERATION

दैवमेवापरे यज्ञं योगिनः पर्युपासते ।

daivam evāpare yajñam yoginaḥ paryupāsate
brahmāgnāvapare yajñam yajñenaiivopajuhvati

ब्रह्माग्नावपरे यज्ञं यज्ञेनैवोपजुहति ॥ ४-२५ ॥

श्रोत्रादीनीन्द्रियाण्यन्ये संयमाग्निषु जुहति ।

śhrotrādīnīndriyāṅyanye sanyamāgniṣhu juhvati
śhabdādīn viśhayānanya indriyāgniṣhu juhvati

शब्दादीन्विषयानन्य इन्द्रियाग्निषु जुहति ॥ ४-२६ ॥

सर्वाणीन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे ।

sarvāṅīndriya-karmāṇi prāṇa-karmāṇi chāpare
ātma-sanyama-yogāgnau juhvati jñāna-dīpīte

आत्मसंयमयोगाग्नौ जुहति ज्ञानदीपिते ॥ ४-२७ ॥

द्रव्ययज्ञास्तपोयज्ञा योगयज्ञास्तथापरे ।

dravya-yajñās tapo-yajñā yoga-yajñās tathāpare
swādhyāya-jñāna-yajñāśh cha yatayaḥ sanśhita-
vratāḥ

स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः संशितव्रताः ॥ ४-२८ ॥

अपाने जुहति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथापरे ।

apāne juhvati prāṇam prāṇe 'pānam tathāpare
prāṇāpāna-gatī ruddhvā prāṇāyāma-
parāyaṇāḥ

प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायामपरायणाः ॥ ४-२९ ॥

TRANSLATION

- (25)** Some yogis worship the celestial gods with material offerings unto them. Others worship perfectly by offering the self as sacrifice in the sacrificial fire of the Supreme Truth.
- (26)** Others offer hearing and other senses in the sacrificial fire of restraint. Still others offer sound and other objects of the senses as sacrifice in the fire of the senses.
- (27)** Some, inspired by knowledge, offer the functions of all their senses and their life energy in the fire of the controlled mind.
- (28)** Some offer their wealth as sacrifice, while others offer severe austerities as sacrifice. Some practice the eight-fold path of yogic practices, and yet others study the scriptures and cultivate knowledge as sacrifice, while observing strict vows.
- (29)** Still others offer as sacrifice the outgoing breath in the incoming breath, while some offer the incoming breath into the outgoing breath. Some arduously practice *prāṇāyāma* and restrain the incoming and outgoing breaths, purely absorbed in the regulation of the life-energy.

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1kvGDnkV6hFYIU_5xrd_aoUhNU9UtqYmA

Commentary:

Verse 25:

Here Lord Krishna explains the different kinds of sacrifice (*yajna*) that people perform. This is because people vary in their understanding of sacrifice as they possess different levels of consciousness. In any event, sacrifices should be performed in divine consciousness as an offering to the Supreme Lord. Persons with lesser understanding, and wanting material rewards, make offerings to the celestial gods. Others with deeper understanding of the meaning of *yajna* offer their own selves as sacrifice to the Supreme. They completely surrender themselves to God. This is called *ātma samarpaṇa*, or *ātmāhutī*, or offering one's soul to God. In this world of dust and din, whenever one makes *ātmāhutī* in the flame of divine love, there is grace, for no true *ātmāhutī* can ever go in vain. The ability to see the *Brahman* or spiritual substratum pervading all existence everywhere is factually a potent form of *yajna* or offerings of worship as propitiation to the Supreme Lord. This type of *yajna* is superior to all other *yajnas*.

Verse 26:

Here Lord Krishna talks about two other types of sacrifices that are actually diametrically opposed to each other. The first kind are the *Yogis* who practice celibacy or self-renunciation and offer each sense as a sacrifice in the fire of self-discipline and thus restrain their senses to lead a life of self-control. Others like the *grihastas* or those family orientated

householders offer the sense objects themselves as oblations into their senses which they envision to be the fire. They remain unattached to sense objects while still enjoying them. The senses are considered by them to be the fire and such persons indulge themselves in sense gratification as a symbol of performing *yagna* or worship. The ones belonging to the first type can be termed *Hatha Yogis*, whereas those of the second type can be considered as *Bhakti Yogis*. In *Hatha Yogis*, the actions of the senses are suspended, except for the bare maintenance of the body. The mind is completely withdrawn from the senses and made introvertive, by force of will-power. On the other hand, in *Bhakti Yogis*, the senses are made to behold the glory of the Creator that manifests in every atom of His creation. The senses no longer remain as instruments for material enjoyment; rather they are sublimated to perceive God in everything. *Bhakti Yogis* practice to behold God through all their senses, in everything they see, hear, taste, feel, and smell.

Verse 27:

There are some other *Yogis* who follow the path of knowledge or *Jñāna Yoga*, and indulge their knowledge into withdrawing their senses from the world. While *Hatha Yogis* strive to restrain their senses with strong will-power, *Jñāna Yogis* accomplish the same goal with the repeated practice of discrimination based on knowledge. They engage in deep contemplation upon the illusory nature of the world, and the identity of the self as distinct from the body, mind, intellect, and ego. The senses are withdrawn from the world, and the mind is engaged in meditation upon the self. The goal is to become practically situated in self-knowledge, in the assumption that the *Self (Atman)* is identical with the *Ultimate Reality (The Paramaatman)*. As aids to contemplation, they chant aphorisms such as: *tattvamasi* “I am That,” (Chhāndogya Upaniṣhad 6.8.7)[v21] and *aham brahmāsmi* “I am the Supreme Entity.” (Bṛihadāranyak Upaniṣhad 1.4.10) [v22]. The practice of *Jñāna Yoga* is a very difficult path, which requires a determined and trained intellect. The success in the practice of *Jñāna Yoga* is only possible for those who are at an advanced stage of self-renunciation.

Verse 28:

Lord Krishna advises Arjuna that sacrifices can take on many forms, but when they are dedicated to God, they become means of purification of the mind and senses and elevation of the soul. In this verse, He mentions three such *Yajñas (Sacrifices)* that can be performed, including **(a) Dravya or Artha Yajña (Sacrifice of wealth)**. There are those who are inclined toward earning wealth and donating it in charity toward a divine cause. Although they may engage in large and complicated business endeavors, yet their inner motivation remains to serve God with the wealth they earn. In this manner, they offer their natural inclination for earning money as sacrifice to God in devotion. Their slogan is: “Make all you can. Save all you can. Give all you can.” **(b) Yoga Yajña**. As elaborated earlier under *Upanishads* during 2017-2018 (please refer to the *Weekly Mandir Bulletins* of Mandir Website <http://www.pbhm.org> for details), Patañjali’s *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga* describes the 8-fold path toward spiritual advancement, starting with physical techniques and ending in conquest of the mind. Some people find this yogic path attractive and practice it as sacrifice. So, when persons inclined toward *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga* learn to love God, they offer their yogic practice as *Yajña* in the fire of devotion. **(c) Jñāna Yajña**. Some persons are inclined

toward the cultivation of knowledge through study of Vedic scriptures for enhancing one's understanding and love for God. True knowledge is that which increases our devotion to God. Thus, studiously inclined *Siddhas* engage in the sacrifice of knowledge, which when drenched with the spirit of devotion, leads to loving union with God.

Verse 29:

Lord Krishna explains here that some offer *prana* (exhaling breath) as a *yajña* (sacrifice) to *apana* (incoming breath) and *vice versa* (that is, *apana* as a *yajña* to *prana*). Continuous practice of this leads to both *prana* and *apana* becoming an offering to *kumbhaka* which is the complete cessation of both breaths, generally referred to as *prāṇāyāma* or the “control of breath.” *Pranayama* helps tame the senses and bring the mind into focus. The controlled mind is then offered as *yajna* to the Supreme Lord.