**"Each soul is potentially divine. And the goal is to manifest the divinity within!"**

This is an attempt to understand and manifest the divine qualities like we look in the mirror, see our reflection and correct our self. However, correcting our self once or twice will not bring the change within. The change comes with constant practice *(Abhyasam)* and that results in manifesting of the divinity within. So with determination one should persevere to practice in day to day life. - *"Samkalpo wai jayate karmamulam." (Determination is at the root of all actions!!)*

There are 26 divine properties as stated in Srimad Bhagvad Gita in chapter 16.1 - 16.3. The divine qualities are actually the qualities of what we call goodness - appreciable, noteworthy, and polished gentlemanly qualities.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| SN | Divine Quality | SN | Divine Quality |
| 1 | अभयम् (Fearlessness) | 14 | शान्तिः (Peacefulness) |
| 2 | सतवसंशुदधि (Purity of Mind) | 15 | अपैशुनम् (Absence of vilification) |
| 3 | ज्ञानयोगवयवसथिति (Steadfastness in the Yoga of Knowledge) | 16 | दयाभूतेषु (Compassion) |
| 4 | दानम् (Charity) | 17 | अलोलुप्त्वम् (Non Covetousness) |
| 5 | दमः (Restraint of senses) | 18 | मार्दवम् (Gentleness) |
| 6 | यज्ञः (Performance of Yagnas) | 19 | हरि (Modesty) |
| 7 | स्वाध्यायः (Scriptural Studies) | 20 | अचापलम् (Freedom from restlessness) |
| 8 | तपः (Austerity) | 21 | तेजः (Grandeur) |
| 9 | आरजवम् (Rectitude) | 22 | क्षमा (Forgiveness) |
| 10 | अहिंसा (Non-injury) | 23 | धृति (Fortitude) |
| 11 | सत्यम् (Truthfulness) | 24 | शौचम् (Cleanliness) |
| 12 | अकरोध (Absence of Anger) | 25 | अदोह (Absence of Malice) |
| 13 | त्यागः (Renunciation) | 26 | नातिमानिता (Absence of Pride) |

**Yagna (**यज्ञः**):**

The sixth divine quality is "Yagnasch" - Performance of "Yagna": The performance of scriptural and social duties with dedication and for Self Realization constitutes "Yagna". Yagna is a very broad topic and hence the attempt is to explain in three different parts - (1)What constitutes a "Yagna" ? ; (2) Why to perform a "Yagna"? and (3) How to perform a "Yagna"?.

First point is to understand - What constitutes as "Yagna"? Ordinarily the word "Yagna" signifies the ritual of "Havan". Similar to performing a "Havan", if a person lights up the fire of virtuous acts, in the shape of duties and dedicates the result of the acts to God, the performance of the duties of daily life becomes a splendid "Yagna". Secondly, every action cannot be said to be "Yagna". Those actions which carry the sanction of Vedas form the basis of "Yagna" (Shl 3.15). Its important to note that Worship done with complete faith and total abandonment to the deity would be called as "Yagna". It does not constitute of acts that advance narrow, selfish ends. Being calculative is not "Yagna" (Shl 4.25). "Yagna" is a technique by which a person seperates its individuality and live a life for others.

In scriptures, its illustrated that there are five supreme Yagna's; (i) Brahama Yagna (Contemplation on meaning of scriptures, meditation, chanting of Lord's name and similar disciplines, which lift the mind from worldly thoughts and take it towards Self-realization); (ii) Deva Yagna (Fire ritual where offerings are made to gods with recitation of mantras); (iii) Atithi Yagna (Hospitality of invited or uninvited guests); (iv) Pitri Yagna (Feed to self realized persons and cater to their needs as token of reverential sentiments to ancestors); (v)Balivaishva deva yagna (to feed and give food grains and drinking waters to animals who are dependent upon human beings for their sustenance). Further in shl 4.28, the Lord has mentioned 4 different type of Yagnas - (i) Dravya yagna (The utilization for general welfare of material acquisitions of any type earned by just and fair means without the desire of fame); (ii)Tap Yagna (Fasting and bearing physical and mental sufferings gladly for righteous dealings, living an austere life, giving up food and totally unmindful of heat and cold); (iii) Yog Yagna (following precepts of patanjali yog sutras in which one controls the thoughts of mind); (iv) Swadhyay / Jnana Yagna (Similar to brahma yagna as explained earlier). The common factor in all "Yagnas" is performance of actions with selfless spirit and with complete dedication to the Lord. Further Lord has explained that "Jnana Yagna" is superior, nobler and more beneficial than the "Yagna" performed with materials (Shl 4.33). This is further emphasised in Shloka 10.25 "… Yaganam Japa Yagyaosmi…" where the Lord, emphasizes that in all "Yagnas", Silent chanting of his name (Naam Jap) is the supreme. Remember the famous Sant Kabir saying "Pothi padh padh ke, pundit bhaya na koye; Dhai akshar prem ke padhe, so pundit hoye"

Question arises what happens if the bhaav changes while doing the "Yagna"? Then the "Yagna" gets classifed into 3 categories as explained by Lord; (i) Sattvic Yagna (A yagna perfomed according to scriptural commandments, without coveting the results thereof, and the firm conviction that doing so is one's bounden duty - Shl 17.11); (ii) Rajasic Yagna (A yagna peformed for achieving a worldly objective - Shl17.12); (iii) Tamasic Yagna (A yagna peformed without faith and contrary to scriptural injunctions and only as a social practice in imitation of others - Shl 17.13). So always keep a bhaav of "Neki kar, dariya mein daal !" So "Yagna" is living a life of selflessness.

Second point is to understand - Why to perform a "Yagna"? In practice shloka, 3.11;

"Devān bhāvayatānena te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ, parasparaṃ bhāvayantaḥ śreyaḥ param avāpsyatha". Here Lord has stated that "By performance of your duties devoutly in the form of "Yagna" strengthen the divine powers; then those divine powers would strengthen you. Thus, by mutual strengthening, you would achieve the Supreme Purpose of life." Here the divine powers are indicated by Sun which provides the divine energy in form of light, Air which distributes the cosmic energy, Ocean which provides the water etc. The performance of "Yagna" ensures that the divine powers remain active for the benefit of living entities. Secondly, Further in shloka 3.12, "… tair dattan apradayaibhyo yo bhunkte stena eva sah" the Lord has reinforced that - One who is out only to enjoy the objects without offering to the gods is certainly a thief." Thirdly, consider "Yagna" as 'Kaamdhenu'. When individual and social duties are performed dedicatedly in form of "Yagna" then these performance of duties provides the necessities of life and "Yagna" becomes the provider of cherished desires. Fourthly, if a person acts only in performance of "Yagna", the results of all past actions are dissolved. This only happens when the person is free from attachments, of ego, of the sense of self-aggrandizement and the mind is absorbed in the thoughts of divinity. (shl 4.23). Further, Lord has advised in Shl18.5 that acts pertaining to "Yagna" should never be abandoned. Yagna is identifying as 'One' with nature and live in a spirit of togetherness whether in family or in the world.

Third point is - How to perform? "Yagna" should be performed with great enthusiasm, but without an eye on the material benefits. Such an action does not give rise to compulsive obligations but in fact leads to happiness in this life and to emancipation hereafter. So, whatever we have that we share with the world. Secondly, after doing "Yagna" one should partake the remnants after rendering to gods, thereby which one will be freed of all sins (Shl 3.13, Shl4.31). Thirdly, all the "Yagnas" should start with utterance of 'OM TAT SAT' (refer to shl 17. 23 - 27 for further explanation). By doing so the performer is automatically conjoined to the Lord, without any craving for the results, and actions dedicated to the Lord. Fourthly, let’s look at some examples. The famous example is that of King Janaka who performed Self less action and led a life of Rajarshi. Another simple example is of a 'Householder'. The one who earns provides to his family and extended family as a part of his duty; provides to society like building temples or sharing scriptural knowledge; shares with other living beings like feeding fish or planting plants and all this is done without expecting anything in return. After doing this he continues to partake the remnants of his earning. In ordinary sense, such a person is performing a "Yagna".

So in essence "Yagna" is living in a spirit that divine is manifesting through us and we are 'One' with the Lord and its manifestations.

Hari Om!!