Sloka 28 (Chapter 4)

DRAVYA YAJNAS TAPOYAJNA YOGA YAJNAS TATHAPARE’
SWADHYAYA YAJNA-JNANAYAJNASCHA YATAYAH SAMSHITA VRATAHA.

Others offer wealth, austerity and yoga as sacrifice. Some others, the ascetics of self-control and rigid vows, offer study of knowledge as sacrifice.

Dravya yajna:

It is the sacrifice by using the wealth as oblations in the fire of knowledge. The scriptures advocate acquiring the wealth only after learning all about “Dharma”. The Purushartha for a Hindu is “Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha.” “Artha” refers to the wealth one has to acquire in life. Acquiring wealth by righteous means and making use of it to conduct the five “Nitya karmas” is true “Dravya Yajna.” (Refer to Karma yoga slokas 8 and 13)

Dana/alms giving is a form of Dravya yajna. The scriptures do give detailed advice/instructions about this type of yajna. Charity comes from giving with love what one has to others who need it. Of course it goes without saying that charity has to be only that which has been acquired lawfully and not in the form of robbing the poor to give the rich. We will find in the latter chapters of the Gita detailed instructions on the subject of “Danam.”

Tapo yajna:

This is the sacrifice wherein the body and the senses are subjected to austerities (tapas) with the sole intention of purification.

We see pictures of sages and those wishing to acquire boons from gods standing in the extreme heat or cold, withstanding the extremes of weather and concentrating on the deity of choice. The word “Tapas” for an average brings to mind the above picture. Really speaking “Tapas” is an effort at purification.

A true student working hard in University and coming out with a degree is said to have conducted “Tapas” and purified his brain to get the degree. He did not let his mind wander about and become a tool for the play of the senses. He managed to get control over his senses and concentrated on the final goal.

To achieve something higher, one needs to let go of the lower. This is possible by control of the wandering mind and the senses. Any such act conducted to achieve the higher spiritual goal by constant restraint becomes “Tapas.”

In chapter 17, slokas 14, 15 and 16 the Lord gives us tapas of the body, speech and mind and that is “Tapas” in the truest sense.

*** will be continued***