

Baghavat Geeta, Class 28

Greetings All,

Shloka # 55:

Sri Krishna answered:

“When one wholly discards desires of the heart and becomes exclusively content with the Self, one is called a sage of stable wisdom. O Arjuna.”

Refreshing our memory, Swamiji says, we have come to the fourth and final topic of Sthitha Pragyaha. Arjuna asked Sri Krishna if a person who has gone through all Sadhanas and become a Gyani, how does such a person face life? How does he respond to situations? What are his Lakhsanani's?

Before a person becomes a Sthitha Pragyaha he has to follow the following three steps:

1. Lead a religious life following path of Karma Yoga.
2. Study Vedanta scriptures under a competent teacher following Sravanam and Mananam.

These two steps will make him a Pragyaha or one with conviction in the teachings. At this stage knowledge is still at the intellectual level.

3) But even this prajñā status is not enough, because the knowledge remains at the intellectual level and therefore in the third stage, he has to convert the intellectual knowledge into emotional strength, because throughout the life, it is our emotional personality that is interacting. Emotional personality is the one that stands out in all of us. Any little disturbance bothers us. This personality bears the brunt of every situation. And if that emotional personality is not transformed, knowledge will be there at one level, but in my day-to-day life, I may continue to go through the turmoils

that I went through before. And therefore, if Vedanta should be of any practical use, I have to spend time, converting this knowledge into emotional strength, which is called Sthitha (Sthira) Pragyaha. This status should be great help, especially during a crisis.

And this process of converting prajna into sthita prajna, jnanam into jnana nishta is the third stage and that person who has purified his mind; who has gained the knowledge and who has derived emotional strength from that knowledge, such a person is called sthitaprajnah; such a person is also called jnana nishta, atma nista as well as jivan mukthaḥ. He has insulated himself, like a person who has insulated his hands and legs and can now touch a live wire and it will not shock him.

Arjuna asked Sri Krishna, What kind of a person is this?

The Gyani is not controlled by external emotional factors. He is happy within himself. Citing example of a man with a walking stick, once he gets the strength back in his leg, he drops the stick. So also, a Gyani drops all his Kama. So, his Poornatvam leads him to Kama Tyaga.

Kama here means desired object although it can also mean desires. Desire is in the mind wriggling like worms. Wherever we go, we cannot drop it. It follows us everywhere, disturbing us all the time.

Tyaga or renunciation is of two types.

1) I cannot reach the grapes so I walk away calling it sour grapes. A man goes to Hrishikesh running away from his family's problems. These are examples where my desires are suppressed. This is not true renunciation.

2) Walking away from situations due to my Self Knowledge leads to a desire-less stage or true renunciation.

Swamiji says there are two types of desires:

- 1) Allowed desires and
- 2) Not allowed desires.

Allowed desires: For a desire to be allowed it has to fulfill three conditions.

1. Legitimate: The desire must be legitimate or Dharmic. Desire for one's children's welfare is legitimate. Desire for a home for the family bought through honest earnings is legitimate.
2. Moderate: When worldly desires reach such levels that spiritual pursuit is forgotten, it is not an acceptable state. Human beings have a material aspect as well as a spiritual aspect. Whatever I do, I must remember that material things including this body are all impermanent and incidental. Our real core is spiritual. So, provide time for spirituality first and then pursue material goals.
3. Desires must be non-binding: Convert desires into preferences. Or make it non binding. When a desire is binding it can upset you or uplift you. In pursuing a desire you may or may not obtain it. Any dream can shatter. A binding Kama is a time bomb. Defuse it by proper understanding. I have a desire. I work for it. But, there are chances it may not be fulfilled. When the desire is not fulfilled, one must be mentally prepared for the disappointment as well. Citing an example consider you are watching your favorite TV show when the power goes off. I must be mentally prepared for this disappointment. This is converting the Kama from binding to non-binding or Shuddha Kama (Legitimate, moderate and nonbinding). Shudha Kama is allowed. Even Shankaracharya had desires that allowed him to write the Bhashyam. As per Vedas, even Bhagawan had desires.

If a Gyani is desire-less, then how come desire is allowed?

Shankaracharya himself raises this question and he answers saying that Bhagavan's and jnani's kamas are Shuddha kama's; if they are fulfilled, wonderful; if not fulfilled also it is fine.

Jnani has got motive coming from within him to work hard; but that motive is without a sting. So, whatever happens, it does not hurt him. And therefore, Jnani renounces all ashuddha kamas; whatever kamas he has, they are shuddha.

So, Ashudha Kama should be renounced.

Shloka # 56:

"The silent sage is said to have stable wisdom when sufferings no longer perturb his mind, when he ceases to cling to pleasures, and he is rid of attachment, fear and wrath."

How does a Gyani respond to unfavorable situations in life? A Gyani too cannot avoid unfavorable situations. We all have prarabhda Karma to work out as does the Gyani. Gyani may not acquire any Agami Karmas, but whatever he has acquired they have to play out.

Gyani's mind is emotionally so strong that disturbances are minimal. As we assimilate the teachings the mind gradually becomes strong. How to measure our selves? Swamiji cautioned us that we should not measure others, only measure our self.

Check for the following:

1. The frequency of mental disturbances, are they becoming less? Consider maintaining a daily diary.
2. Watch the intensity of mental disturbances. When intensity is small, the reaction goes away soon. When reactions are strong, it can overflow into the organ of speech. Speech can become harsh. If it overflows to physical body, shivering and other symptoms occur and

both body and mind are affected.

3. How much time do I take to recover balance? Emotional trauma can take a long time to recover sometimes weeks, years, or even a lifetime. With knowledge recovery should be faster.

All these disturbances can also occur due to positive emotions as well. A man won an election after many attempts at it. The emotion of the win gave him a heart attack.

Gyani is one who is not carried away even in a positive situation. Gyani is free from:

1. Ragaha: emotional attachments
2. Shoka:
3. Moha:

(Note: *Raga*, *Shoka* and *Moha*. *Raga* means dependence, attachment. *Shoka* means grief, sorrow. *Moha* means conflict, confusion caused by *Raga*. It also means depending on external things or people or situations to be happy.)

Attachment comes from dependence or a weak mind. Attachment is always asking what will "I" get out of it. Attachment thinks, since I want to get a benefit, I want to control the other person or it establishes possessiveness.

Love, however, comes from a strong mind. Love comes with the mindset asking: "What does the other person get out of it? What can I give?" To love is not to control, but give freedom to the other person.

Gyani has love in his heart.

Take away from this class:

1. Consider keeping a daily emotional diary.
2. Concepts of love versus attachment taught today try to bring it into your daily life.
3. At the last Kaivalya class, there was a passionate

discussion about Karma yoga and if it is teaching us escapism? In this Gita class, Swamiji brings answers that provide greater clarity to this question. So, is desire for material objects acceptable? Can a workingman aspire for a higher position, say, to become a CEO? The answer is, it is absolutely all right to have such desires so long as they fit into the requirements of "Acceptable desires". It is perfectly **legitimate** to seek any advancement including to the position of a CEO. The challenge is, in the process of advancement, one has to bring in **moderation**. Spiritual goals should continue to be primary, materials goals being secondary. In climbing up the ladder one can fail. The failure should not result in creating emotional havoc. One should be able to accept it with minimal shock. This is the **non-binding desire** aspect. One should thank God even for the failure for he may have saved you from something much worse such as a broken family, estranged wife and children etc. I suspect future classes will elaborate on some of these themes.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Kaivalya Upanishad, Class 6

Greetings All,

Continuing his teaching on Kaivalya Upanishad Swamiji says, the student approached the teacher and asked for Brahma Vidya. He was sufficiently informed that it was the only means of liberation. What are the means to obtain Brahma Vidya?

Brahmaji says there are two means. 1. Direct or Sakshat and 2. Supporting means.

Direct means requires Sravanam, Mananam and Nidhidhysanam or Gyana Yoga.

Indirect means requires Vairagyam. Just as a plant requires a seed (direct means) and soil, water, sunlight (indirect means).

Vairagyam or Tyagam is of two types:

1. Internal renunciation and
2. External renunciation.

Internal renunciation is essential. External renunciation is not compulsory. It is required only if it supports internal renunciation.

After presenting both means Brahmaji now discusses a range of Sadhanas that are life long pursuits. It may even be life long pursuits. Swamiji reminded us that we are in this class, here today, because of our karmas from our previous birth. It is that which attracted us to this class.

The three stages of Sadhana are now described.

1. Practice Karma Yoga to purify the mind.
2. Practice Upasana Yoga to bring focusing capacity to mind and
3. Above two result in Gyanam.

Shloka # 5:

Swamiji says Shlokas 5, 6 and 7 are all describing the entire range of Dhyanams. The three stages of Dhyanam are:

1. Eka Roopa Dhyanam
2. Aneka Roopa Dhyanam
3. Vedanta Vichara

4. Aroopa Dhyanam.

In Eka Roopa Dhyanam you meditate upon your Ishta devatha.

In Aneka Roopa Dhyanam you meditate upon the entire universe or Vishwa roopa.

First and second stages of Dhyanam are under Upsana. Having practiced this for a sufficient period of time one enters Vedanta Vichara. Here one studies Vedanta under a qualified teacher then starts Aroopa Dhyanam. In Aroopa Dhyanam he discovers that Aroopa Ishvara is really meditation upon Myself or on the "Meditator".

The preparatory steps for any Dhyanam or Antaranga Sadhana are now described. In shastras eight steps are described, however, Swamiji says he has condensed it to four for simplicity's sake.

The four steps are:

1. Desha: The place of meditation. It should be clean, secluded and a spiritual place.
2. Kala: Time of meditation. Any time is fine. Early morning is a preferred time. One's mind should be Satvic (alert and quiet).
3. Asanam: Seat. One should not sit on a floor or hard or soft surface.
4. Sharira Sthithi: Condition of body and sense organs:
 1. Body should be straight and steady,
 2. Sense organs withdrawn,
 3. Breath, slow and smooth and
 4. In a Sanyasi mind. In this mental state one should not have relationship with anything other than the following three:
 1. Guru
 2. Shastra
 3. Ishwara.
5. Intellect: Must be convinced of the utility of

meditation.

Now you are ready for meditation. If possible, meditate after taking a bath.

Gita Chapter 6 describes this whole process of meditation as well. Posture should be erect, eyes directed at nose (not mind directed at nose). Breath, smooth and even. Mind in an attitude of Sanyasa.

Before starting meditation invoke Guru(s) and perform namaskaram. This reminds you of their teachings as you start meditation.

Shloka # 6:

One has to turn the mind to the heart.

Heart is compared to a Lotus flower. According to shastras heart is the place where mind resides, not in the brain. Within the heart the mind exists. In the mind you invoke Eka roopa, Aneka roopa and Aroopa. Lotus stands for purity. Mind must be like lotus, free from rajas, tamas, not wandering, not sleepy, in a sattvic state and with a cheerful countenance. May you invoke in the chest.

Up to this it is preparation.

Now the meditation itself is described. This is described in Gita chapter #6 as well. Flow of similar thoughts to the exclusion of dissimilar thoughts is meditation. In meditation flow of thought exists. It is not a thoughtless state. Any thought connected to the object of meditation or similar thoughts is appropriate.

1. **Aroopa Ishvara Meditation:** You must have studied Vedanta before this meditation. May you meditate upon the un-objectifiable Ishwara or Subject or Shiva Aham or Avyaktham (cannot be seen or known by sense organs), says Swamiji.

Shivam is used in shloka to mean all three states of meditation. Shivam is formless consciousness, peaceful, immortal, infinite, one without beginning or end, infinite cause of universe, fullness, knowledge and bliss, formless and the greatest wonder (that it is me).

If it were an object I would have stumbled upon it. In reality it "I", myself.

2) **Aneka Roopa Meditation:** That which appears in manifold form.

Mantra # 7:

3. **Eka Roopa meditation:** Mantra # 7 describes it. Here Lord Shiva is shown as object to meditate upon. It is only an example. It can be Vishnu, Ganesha or any other Ishvara.

Swamiji says Uma and Maheshvara are jointly called Umachi.

Shiva is described as the highest lord of creation, one who is omnipotent, with three eyes, blue necked, blue skied, and sitting in a meditative state.

The two eyes denote division, while third eye unites, symbolizing Advaita.

So, mediate upon shiva or any other Ishta Devatha. Eventually, one has to go through all three stages of Dhyanam.

What are the benefits of meditation?

The meditator will attain ye Lord himself. What type of Lord is he? What type of Ishwara? He is:

- 1) Jagat karana Ishwara, Bhutha Yoni.
- 2) Witness of entire creation,
- 3) All illuminating consciousness.

4) Beyond ignorance and Maya.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Kaivalya Upanishad, Class 5

Continuing his teaching on Kaivalya Upanishad Swamiji says, the student Ashvalayana approached Guru Brahmaji and asked for Brahma Vidya. This indicates maturity of the student. He does not ask for liberation, rather asks for Brahma Vidya. This is an important corollary as student is very clear that liberation can only be got through Brahma Vidya. Every student coming to Vedanta should know that it is the only means of getting knowledge and liberation. Knowledge is not an option in the path to liberation, as no other method is available. This should be very clear to any student. Draupadi thought, her five husbands or Bhishma and others would save her honor. They were all helpless. In this state, she called out to Sri Krishna. Her surrender was absolute. She even dropped her other hand holding her dress. Our commitment to Brahma Vidya should like Draupadi's. Then the heart will be ready to absorb the teaching. Moksha is possible only through Brahma Vidya.

So, what is the means to obtain Brahma Vidya or knowledge? There are not many methods. You have to use a mirror to properly see yourself. This mirror is the Guru Shashtra Upadesha. There is no other choice. Vedanta Sravanam, Mananam and Nidhidhyasanam are the only methods. Furthermore, our

approach to receiving the teaching must be whole hearted.

Brahmaji says: For Gyana Yoga to be fruitful conditions must be ideal for Gyanam. One essential quality is to possess Vairagyam or Thyaga. Renunciation is my mental preparation to handover to God all my possessions including my body, with thanks. This is called Ahamkara or Mamakara Tyagam or Vairagyam. Once this occurs Gyanam is produced. Gyanam then produces liberation.

The Process then is: Vedanta Study> Gyana Yoga> Gyanam> Moksha.

Shloka # 4: This is not a one day course or crash program. Initially in life, Dharma, Artha and Kama are the main focus with Moksha in the back-burner. Gradually Moksha gains priority. Then, it becomes a burning desire. At this stage one will sacrifice anything for it. Greater the desire, greater the sacrifice one is ready to make. This change in priority occurs gradually in life. Priority reshuffling is constantly happening in our lives. As my desire for Moksha increases my pursuit intensifies until it converges into one. Just like the sun's rays get focused under a lens. It is an evolutionary process.

Swamiji reminded us that a Grahastha usually chants Shloka's 3 and 4 together while welcoming a Sanyasi. This shloka also occurs in Mundaka Upanishad.

So, what are the stages?

- First step is, right direction is required. Our ultimate goal is Moksha. This requires Gyanam. Gyanam requires a prepared mind. To prepare a mind one requires Karma Yoga (Purity of mind) and Upasana (Attention of mind). So, the first step is scriptural study. Then right effort or proper effort or Karma Yoga is required. This will lead to a purified mind free of Raga and Dvesha. (Note: Attachments (raga) arise from our previous

experiences of pleasure and happiness. Aversions (dvesha) emerge from previous experiences of pain and suffering.)

- Second step is leading a life based upon what is proper and what is not proper or as a Dharmic person or as a Samskritha (cultured person). Nithya Anithya Viveka must be there. Only Brahman can give fullness and lasting happiness. In this stage, there is less and less dependence on material world also called Shuddha Tatva.
- Sanyasa Yoga: This is the third stage. Once mind is mature, purpose of active life is served or complete. Work, work all the time is not the end of Vedas. At some point one has to turn to higher goals. This means reduction or renunciation or Sanyasa. One has to reduce or withdraw from activities. At this time Smaranam, Mananam and Nidhidhyanam is the goal. An active person cannot spend time in Smaranam, Mananam and Nidhidhyanam. The seeker also has to become introvert.

Brahma Vidya and Grihasta stages of life are > Extrovert.

Vanaprastha and Sanyasa stages are > Introvert.

So, during Sanyasa find quality time for Vedanta. You alone are immortal.

- The last stage is Sravanam, mananam and Nidhidhyanam for an extended period of time. Here we are trying to change the way of looking at the world or God. This is not easy. By committing to this, one becomes Brahma Nishta.

Vedanta Shatram gives self-knowledge, while Vedanta Artha is the crux. Central teaching of Vedanta is “ I am ever free, I am ever full, still I am struggling to reach what I already am”. Do not look outside.

Su-niscitarthah: means this teaching has to become a conviction.

Those people who have conviction about shastra, is the culmination of spiritual sadhana. Such people reach Jivan Mukti or become one with Brahman in this life. One gets absolute eternity.

Swamiji says Svarga is only a relative eternity. They continue in this world as long as Prarabdha Karma requires. The fall of a Gyani is called Parantakala or final death. Final death, because in an Agyani it is not final, he will be born again. For Agyani, it is intermittent death. In Gyani all three bodies (Sthula, Sukshma and Karana Shariras) are resolved. They merge with Brahman or Brahma Chaitanya.

Several religions lead to Chitta Shuddhi. However, ultimate knowledge should be: "Aham Poornaha".

Shloka # 5:

In previous three mantras Brahmaji taught Gyanam.

Now he teaches Dhyanam. Kailvalya does not teach Karma Yoga. It assumes the student has already gone through it. At the end of Kaivalya, Karma Yoga is briefly discussed.

In Gita's sixth chapter Dhyanmam is shown as two fold.

1. PreVedanta meditation is performed to make myself ready for Vedanta.
2. Post Vedanta meditation is performed to internalize whatever I studied, at the deepest level.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 27

Shloka # 52:

“When your intellect goes beyond the mist of delusion, you will win detachment from both what is to be heard and what has been heard.”

Shloka # 53:

“You will win this supreme yoga when your intellect, bewildered by Vedic texts, becomes firm and unwavering in concentration.”

In shlokas 52 and 53 respectively Sri Krishna concludes his summary of the basic teachings of a spiritual life as described by the vedas. All other chapters of Gita are a magnification of these two verses. This is the foundation upon which a 18-story edifice has been raised. Chapter 2, all verses 11-43 are very important, as are Jnana Yoga verses 11-25. One should try to memorize them and try to read them daily. All other chapters are based upon these verses. This will give you a strong foundation. Read these verses off and on. In this chapter, chapter 2, Karma Yoga and Gyana Yoga were described.

Karma yoga: is a religious life, where spiritual progress is important and while material life is not.

Gyana Yoga: The Karma Yogi's mind will mature to study Gyana Yoga or one's own Self. Just as a spectacle has got two goggles; the body and mind are like two media with which I interact. At the time of sleep, both the media, the body and the mind are resolved temporarily; and our transactions with the world stops. But even when the transactions stop, I continue to exist as a conscious being; a non-transacting conscious being. And Sri Krishna's contention is this conscious being is my true nature. Body and mind are just two

spectacles that are resolved in this knowledge of the Self.

I will still continue to exist as a Conscious Being. The body mind thought complex is only a temporary medium. "I" the pure consciousness will never die, while body and mind will come and go. This recognition is Self-knowledge. I know the body is not myself. It is a shell. This knowledge will then lead to Self-discovery.

Practice Karma yoga to know the mind. Practice Gyana Yoga to discover the Self. This is the essence of Gita.

All these are elaborated in future chapters. Here, now, Sri Krishna allows Arjuna to ask his questions.

Shloka 54:

Arjuna asks:

"How can a man of stable wisdom, anchored in concentration, be described, O Krsna? How does a man of steadfast intelligence speak? How does he sit? How walk?"

Arjuna is a practical man. He wants to know the practical value of the teachings. Will there be a benefit for me? Will it transform me, here and now?

Imagine a person who goes through the path of Karma yoga and then withdraws from all activities and then discovers his Self. He is totally satisfied as well. Such a person is a Gyani. Such a person is called a **Stitha Pragyaha**. **Stitha means freedom from all doubts. Pragyaha means Gyana.**

Another expression used to describe the same person is **Sama-dhitaha** or one with conviction or established in his true nature or Atma. Such a person is one who does not forget his true nature even in day-to-day activities. To such a person knowledge is easily accessible, as he does not forget the teaching at all, so much so that he maintains equanimity even in a crisis.

Sthitadhihi is another expression used to describe such a person. Dhihi means Gyanam. In such a person, "I am Atma", realization is a fact for him.

Thus, we have three definitions of an enlightened person.

Arjuna asks, Sri Krishna, what is description of such a Gyani? I would like to decide if this knowledge is useful to me or not. How will he talk to others, if at all? How will he sit? How will he walk? How does a Gyani conduct himself in the world? How does he think? How does he interact?

Swamiji clarifies that in this shloka the word Bhasha does not mean language but means description of Gyani. Swamiji also says that if there is no Guru, Sanyasa ashramam can be very dangerous, as Sanyasi will not know what to do with his time.

Shloka # 55:

Sri Krishna answered:

"When one wholly discards desires of the heart and becomes exclusively content with the Self, one is called a sage of stable wisdom. O Arjuna."

This is a very important shloka as it provides a definition of a Sthita Pragyaha.

Once we know characteristics of a Gyani, we have a model for all spiritual seekers. Shankaracharya says, whatever is a natural trait in a Gyani, it is a guideline for all Sadhakas. We can also check ourselves against the model. How am I to know if I have reached the goal?

Swamiji cautions: Use this portion only to judge yourself or change yourself, and not to judge others.

Sthitapragyaha sadhanani:

1. What are his natural traits?

2. What are the disciplines to be practiced, to become an Sthita Pragyaha?

Sri Krishna does not discuss all sadhanas here.

Swamiji says everybody has to go through Karma Yoga and Gyana Yoga. Gyana Yoga has three stages:

1. **Sravanam:** Receiving spiritual teaching from a competent teacher. This will help in Self Discovery. Scripture and Guru are like a mirror. They allow you to see your own "Inner Self" or Real Nature. Sravanam removes self-ignorance and helps with self-discovery. It is a mirror.
2. **Mananam:** Even as the student receives the teaching, several doubts come in his mind. **The teacher's goal is not to make the student believe. He wants the student to know. Knowing is different from believing.** Where knowing is involved, buddhi is involved; and buddhi will not accept something unless it is convinced. It should be logical. So, student is allowed to reflect and think about teaching. He can ask all questions, he wants. Therefore the second process of jnana yoga is asking my own intellect honestly, am I convinced? Of what? I am not the body, I am not the mind; but I am the eternal consciousness, functioning through the body and mind; Until and unless the student is convinced, the guru is ready for any amount of discussion. And this interaction and clarifying of all doubts is called mananam. This is the second important part of jnana yoga. By mananam, I remove all the intellectual obstacles. With this the knowledge has been converted into conviction; it is no more mere vague hypothesis or idea, but is a fact for me. Mananam removes intellectual obstacles.
3. **Nidhidysanam:** This intellectual knowledge has to be converted into emotional or psychological strength. It is the emotional personality that we use most of the time, not intellectual. We are disturbed by instances such as not getting coffee in time, car does not start,

somebody overtakes your car etc. You get angry and disturbed. Day to day life is a series of such disturbances. **One must free themselves from all unhealthy emotional responses.**

A person with a high IQ and a very good job came to Swamiji and cried for fifteen minutes. He had problems with his wife. He has IQ but no EQ. Emotional Quotient is a rock like mind that can withstand all disturbances. This involves a big conversion within. Converting knowledge to mental strength. This is called Nidhidyasana. Ask yourself what complexes do I have? In background of this knowledge how do I get over them? Somebody said, "Negatives are developed in dark room of ignorance." Once he goes through Nidhidysanam he becomes Sthitha Pragyaha.

Thus, Sravanam and Mananam lead to Pragyaha. Nidhidysanam makes him Sthitha pragyaha.

Such a mind is called Jivan Mukti. It is a light and non-burdensome mind. The Gyani is not aware of his own mind. Citing example: Swamiji says if body parts are healthy you do not feel them. Only when they are hurt you feel them. "When the shoe fits you do not feel the shoe" is a Chinese proverb. So also with mind, when it is not burdened you do not feel it.

The mind of a Sthitha Pragyaha is now described:

1. Such a person is self sufficient, self-content and does not require external factors emotionally. He might require external factors to provide for food, clothing, shelter, but as far as his emotional being is concerned, he is not going to go with a begging bowl, asking each and everyone, whether you will take care of me. His life is for giving love and care, but his life is not for begging for love and care. What a wonderful attitude. As long as I beg, there will be sanctions. You know what a

sanction is? It is constant blackmail. His life is not for begging, but for giving. He also does not depend on the physical condition of his own body.

2. Once there is fullness in oneself then there is renunciation of all expectations and desires.

Why do desires come? Why does a man look for a walking stick? One, whose legs are weak, needs a walking stick. So also it is with a family, such as wife, son and grandchildren. At each stage in life I feel “Appornatvam” or incompleteness. Gyani, however, does not see himself as incomplete.

He may use these things but he does not need them. Like going out for a walk with a baton. If he does not have the baton he will not fall. Although, he has people around him, he is not dependent on them. Manogatan, all these cravings of mind, torturing and inflicting pains, are cleaned up, not because desires are pushed away by suppression, rather desire drops with discovery of Poornatvam. It happens naturally. Just like when the fruit comes, all the flower petals fall away. Similarly, all these desires should fall, because of the discovery of poornatvam. Through knowledge these props fall away. So, Poornatvam is the second trait of a sthitapragyaha.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 26

Shloka # 49:

“ Work impelled by the desire for fruit is indeed far inferior, evenness of mind being far above it. O Arjuna, Take

refuge in the evenness of intelligence. Pitiful are those impelled by the desire for the fruits of works.”

Shloka # 50:

“With the intelligence of evenness one discards (in this world) both good and evil works (i.e, the merits and demerits of works) Therefore strive to secure this Yoga; Yoga is skill in works.”

Sri Krishna presented Karma yoga in Shlokas 47 and 48 respectively. He will elaborate on them in Chapter 3. Here he only hints at important aspects of karma yoga.

Chapter 3 has two aspects of Karma Yoga.

1. Karma Part: Or proper action, legitimate action, or Sattvic action.
2. Yoga Part: Meaning bringing a proper attitude during action.

As a Karta I should have a healthy attitude. Doing a job I do not like, every day, week after week, one cannot have a healthy attitude. It spoils the mental health, which in turn spoils the physical health as well.

I should love what I do. For every action I do, I will also reap the result. The boss may praise me, promote me or snub me for my action. Even in receiving the feedback I should have a healthy attitude, as a bhoktha. One needs a proper attitude towards Karma as well as Karma Phalam.

Here it is all about proper attitude alone. Samatvam, means an undisturbed mind. A stressed and strained mind is not a Karma Yogi's mind. That is the reason there are so many courses in stress management today.

What is the benefit of Karma Yoga?

Immediate benefit is peace of mind. There is no stress or

strain. Even relationship improves. However, Gita is talking about the ultimate benefits. First, mind becomes more refined. Interest in self-knowledge increases, as mind becomes purer and purer. Self-knowledge becomes more appealing. So, wherever he goes he will see only this topic. Soon, he will come to an appropriate Guru. Under him he graduates from Karma Yoga to Gyana Yoga. He then gets Gyanam and is then ultimately freed or liberated.

Definition of Karma Yoga is:

1. Means balance of mind
2. Kushala Yoga: Means skill in action.

What is skill in action?

It is not the expertise in action. Performing an action repeatedly will make one skilled at it. Shankaracharya gives a beautiful definition; if proper attitude is not there; karma can lead to more and more strain and tension. It can lead to more and more samsara. However, karma yogi is one who uses the very same karma and uses it to attain liberation.

So, the conversion is in attitude, not in action. Thus, cobra's poison used appropriately can even become a medicine. If inappropriately handled Karma can create stress.

Therefore conversion from binding Karma to liberating Karma by a change in attitude towards the action is the essence of Karma Yoga.

Shlok 51:

"Wise men, united with the intelligence of evenness discard, indeed, the fruits of works; they are liberated from the bondage of birth and attain the status which is free from all sufferings."

What are stages leading to liberation?

First stage is Budhiyukthaha: Proper attitude to life and experiences. Here buddhi means proper attitude. Here buddhi also means bhavana. This is born out of right discrimination; without discrimination healthy attitude cannot come about. What is this right discrimination?

The right discrimination is that “ Inner growth is more important than material growth.” Initially more and more money is important. Later, one considers Dharma and Moksha as more important.

Artha Kama (material well being) must be balanced with Dharma and Moksha or Atma Sukham (Atma's well being).

Describing Navarthari, Swamiji says, we worship Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi.

- Durga- for 3 days; Durga signifies health and strength
- Lakshmi for 3 days; Lakshmi signifies wealth and it should not be ignored.
- Saraswathi for 3 days. Saraswathi signifies material and spiritual knowledge.

Navarathri is a balanced approach to all three aspects of one's life.

Second stages is Nithya Anithya viveka also brings a proper attitude that inner growth is more important than material growth.

Then what is the third stage? The first two stages are not sufficient to attain the ultimate goal; a person has to come to jnana yoga, finding out the true goal of life.

What is the goal of life? Look at nature. A seed grows to become a plant. Plant becomes a tree. The tree bears fruits and contributes to the world. Then, at its highest point of growth, it starts to wither away.

So it is also with animals.

I, as a human, am also an integral part of creation. There is a difference between animals and humans. Animal's growth is only physical. Human being grows physically, mentally, emotionally, and intellectually. Human grows to show love, compassion and a capacity to share. Vasudaiva Kudumbakam.

Humans also want to discover the answer to the questions such as: who am I? Is there a God? Unless I discover the answers, I cannot attain spiritual growth. A karma yogi has to not only grow physically but also emotionally, spiritually or intellectually, and that is said here by the word, *maniṣiṇaḥbhutva*. So one should attain this knowledge called jnana yoga.

The fourth and final stage where is where they are freed from their shackles of Samsara. Raga, Shoka and Moha; or the cycle of life and death; or mortality signifies samsara.

(Note: Raga means dependence and attachment. Shoka means grief and sorrow. Moha means conflict and confusion. Raga means depending on external things or people or situations to be happy. As long as I depend upon people to be happy, my happiness is always in danger. Any time, that person may go away from me or die causing sorrow.)

These are the shackles of life. Freed of these shackles the Karma Yogi becomes a Muktha as long as he is alive. I continue in this world, the world continues in me, but I am not affected by it all. This is known as Stitha Pragyaha or Jivan Mukthi. At this stage, the mind becomes light and enjoyable.

What would you do, if your own mind were a burden to you? Wherever you go, the mind also comes with all its problems. Therefore the greatest tragedy is my own mind becoming my enemy. Jivan mukti is that state, where the mind is the lightest; a gift of God, which enjoys love, compassion, relaxation and ananda. He enjoys this stage till his Prarabdha

Karma Lasts. After that he becomes a Videhi Mukthi or merges with God or Ana-mayam.

Karma yoga> Gyana Yoga> Gyanam> Jiva mukthi>Videhimukthi.

Sri Krishna expands on all these areas in future chapters. In Chapter 18 Sri Krishna summarizes everything.

Shlokas 52 and 53 are elaboration of previous verses on benefits of Karma Yoga.

Shloka # 52:

“When your intellect goes beyond the mist of delusion, you will win detachment from both what is to be heard and what has been heard.”

Intellect will cross over its confusion; there will be clarity of thinking and clarity of life. Generally people think moksha is the goal of some Sanyasis with nothing better to do. Actually Moksha is inner maturity. Value of moksha becomes clear. Importance of spiritual goal becomes clear.

Kalilam: Intellectual impurity, regarding priorities of life. Aviveka is called mohah, and this mental confusion alone is called kalilam; Kalilam means the dirt or the Intellectual impurity regarding course of life; regarding the priorities of life. This confusion reduces as one becomes a karma yogi and leads a religious life.

The more one leads a religious life and when Atma Anatma knowledge comes, dispassion towards all external dependencies also develops.

Srotavya here means dependencies on rituals prescribed by Vedas such as for job, money etc. As a person becomes wiser, he realizes that any dependence is bad. External world and things are unpredictable, as such risky. Therefore, karma yogi is one who understands external dependence means fear; total fearlessness can come only when I learn to depend upon God or

myself.

So therefore, learn to switch your dependence from the world to God and finally from God to myself. Thus, the one who understands that this psychological dependence is not good does not want to hold on to it anymore. This is called nirvedam or dispassion towards external objects and relationships.

Dispassion does not mean, hatred, we continue to love and help others, only we do not want to seek help from them. It is learning to be independent of all the known and unknown external dependences. This is the benefit of a religious life. This is the first stage.

Shloka # 53:

“You will win this supreme yoga when your intellect, bewildered by Vedic texts, becomes firm and unwavering in concentration.”

As a person becomes interested in self-dependence, scriptures come and tell him “You do not have to depend on anything. You have within you the eternal source you can depend upon”.

Citing an example: Depending for water on the corporation until somebody tells you your own property has an abundance of water underneath.

So also with Atma. You have to tap into this Atma that is a perennial source of everything. Your innermost nature is atma. It is the source of security; source of love; and source of ananda. I can even start distributing from my source. I don't ask if you love me? I can now love you unconditionally, in spite of all your faults.

So, therefore, there is a big switchover, that is the discovery of purnatvam, abhayatvam, and anandaha, within oneself. And this is called self-discovery. Many people want love and care. This confused mind, which was struggling as to

where to turn to, to get some love and care with no one enquiring about us? Now it decides to go to its inner most source. It discovers the Atma.

Samadhi means poorna Atma, ever secure, embodiment of love. Fullness expressed outside is love.

Citing an example say you won something very big or accomplished something outstanding. On that day you are so full that you will forgive everyone. Sharing and tyagam come easily when you are full.

Imagine a state of mind in poornathvam, even temporarily. To such a mind compassion and love comes naturally.

Swamiji cautions, Self-discovery should be free of two obstacles.

1. Doubt regarding my poornathvam or Samsayaha.
2. Habitual notion that I need external factors to make me happy. Example: A smoker cannot imagine a life without it. So, also with coffee. These habits shackle us. This notion does not go away even after self-discovery. These are Vasanas that do not go away. It is called Viparyaha.

First one is called saṁsayah; second one is called viparyah. These two are powerful obstacles to knowledge, therefore, even after gaining knowledge, one should eliminate these two.

Such a person is called Stithprajna or the one who does not depend upon anyone, except himself. By himself, here means the big Self. Then alone can one attain Moksha or freedom. Freedom from what? Freedom from begging and internal bankruptcy.

This concludes Sri Krishna's teaching on Karma yoga. Now Arjuna is allowed to ask some questions in the tradition of Vedanta.

With Best Wishes,

Kaivalya Upanishad, Class 4

Greetings All,

In mantra #1, Sruthi introduced Ashvalayana and his teacher Brahma. The student with appropriate qualifications asks for Brahmavidya with humility, also called Pariprashnaha.

Having seen the student as well qualified from his approach, Brahmaji agrees to teach him. Brahma addressed the student and gave him instructions on the instruments or Sadhana to be practiced.

The Sadhana's are:

1. Direct means or Sakshat Karanam and
2. Indirect means known as Sahakari Karanam.

Citing an example, from a seed a plant sprouts, however, it also needs good soil, water, air and sunshine to continue to grow. While seed is the direct cause, other factors are also required for its growth and are indirect causes. Even with medication, one needs other disciplines to be followed, such as control of type of food, time etc. Thus the medicine is called aushadham while supporting regimen is called Pathyam.

The three sadhanas prescribed by Brahmaji are:

1. Shradha Yoga, also called Vedanta Sravanam
2. Bhakthi Yoga, also called Mananam Yoga
3. Dhyana Yoga also called Nidhidhyasanam yoga

These three together are known as Gyana Yoga.

Sravanam: is a belief in Vedas and the Acharya. It removes ignorance.

Mananam: is focusing the mind on teaching of the guru and reflecting upon it, just like a cow chewing the cud. This focused reflection removes doubts and develops conviction. It removes intellectual obstacles.

Nididhyasanam: is internalizing the teaching to such an extent that it sinks into my personality. Soaked in Brahmavidya, your every word and action should reflect the teaching learnt. It should result in a transformed person. It removes all emotional obstacles. It removes Vasanas. It removes our tendencies towards anger, jealousy, etc.

Shloka # 3:

Brahmaji says the sahakari karanam or contributing factors are the Sadhana Chatushtaya Sampathi. Only in the presence of Sadhana Chatushtaya Sampathi can Gyanam fructify. Without it all sravanam, mananam and nididhyasanam will not work.

Brahmaji highlights one Sadhana Chatushtaya. He says Vairagya or freedom from emotional attachment (to people, things, position, name, fame) or freedom from psychological weakness is essential. This can also be considered Sanayasa.

There are two types of Sanyasa. 1. Bashya or external Sanyasa and 2. Internal Sanayasa.

In Bhashya Sanyasa one renounces formally and physically. One wears a Kashaya Vastram This is external sanyasa.

Internal renunciation is: I prepare myself to lose anything in life at any time. Things are still normal around me, as always. How to do this? Upanishads do not provide guidance on this. However, now, I function in this world with a different attitude.

Swamiji, offering guidance, says one approach is to have

Viveka. Remembering the fact that whatever I possess, including relatives, are temporary gifts of God sent to educate me. Everyone belongs to God. Let me make use of them to love and share and then finally returning them to God with thanks.

For this we have to train from early on. Surrendering things to God reduces Ahamkara and Mamakara. This is Viaragyam or Thyagam. Gyanam and Raga do not go together.

Gyanam and Vairagyam are both necessary for liberation. No other method will give you liberation.

Karma cannot give gyana or moksha. Karma is not a Pramanam. Karma, sacred or secular activity, is not a means to knowledge. This is because its results are always produced in time. Whatever is produced in time will die while Moksha is Poornatvam.

This however does not mean Karma is useless. It is very useful in purifying the mind for use in Gyana Yoga.

What about children? They too cannot give one freedom. They are here to fulfill their Prarabhdha Karma. I alone have to work for Moksha, nobody else can do it. This is not selfish. Do your duty, both to others as well as your Self.

What about money? Money too cannot get us moksha.

Swamiji says Tyagam is essential. Citing an example: A child learns to walk using a training wheel. The mother after some time removes the training wheel so that it can walk on its own. It will fall, but it will also start walking on its own. This falling is called withdrawal from psychological dependence. Drop the prop, the psychological props. This is called Sanyasa. This can be physical Sanyasa or inner renunciation. Inner renunciation that " I am ready to lose anything at any time as willed by God, through my wisdom and devotion. "

Few people have attained moksha. People do not want to take the risk of completely trusting God. Thus, many are not ready to drop their props.

Now comes the Phalam. What is the benefit of BrahmaVidya?

Sanyasi, one who has performed internal or external renunciation (Yatihi), such a person merges into wisdom through wisdom.

What type of Brahman?

One that is superior to heaven. It is also called painless pleasure. Brahma is beyond heavenly pleasure. The Vaikunta is in the heart of every one. It is in the heart as witness conscious. It is as though hidden.

Guha means our heart is like a dark cave and in wise mind it is ever evident in mind as consciousness. Into this one he merges into. Brahma Aikyam is the benefit of Brahmavidya.

The Brahmavidya is a life long learning project, says Swamiji. There are no short cuts to it.

Swamiji concluded mentioning that a Grihastha often uses Shloka # 3 to welcome a Sanyasi.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 25

Shloka # 47:

“to work alone you have the right and never to the fruits (of

works). Don't be impelled by the fruits of works; (at the same time) don't be tempted to withdraw from works."

Swamiji continuing with his teaching says Sri Krishna now presents the principles of Karma Yoga in Shloka # 47.

We have free will and the will as to what action to take. We also have capacity to act as we have Karma Indriyani. We are not omnipotent to accomplish anything and everything but within the limited power, we can accomplish many things. The word Adhikara means we have a choice. So Arjuna, make use of the free will unique to humans. Free will is not available to animals that act out of instinct. It is this free will that allows us to accomplish our Purusarthas.

Puruṣārtha literally means an "object of human pursuit". It is a key concept in Hinduism, and refers to the four proper goals or aims of a human life. The four **puruṣārthas** are:

- Dharma (righteousness, moral values)
- Artha (prosperity, economic values)
- Kama (pleasure, love, psychological values)
- Mokṣa (liberation, spiritual values).

Swamiji says Purushartha has two meanings. One is free will and another is a human goal. They are, however, interconnected. Thus, while dharma-arta-kama-mokṣa are all called purushartha, the effort that we put forth to accomplish them; that freewill, is also called puruṣharṭha.

You do not have a choice over results of your actions. This concept is often misinterpreted, says Swamiji. Thus, comes the interpretation that results are predestined, as such my effort is not meaningful. God has determined everything beforehand. God also determines results. So, we are totally helpless. This is the fatalistic or deterministic approach and Swamiji says this interpretation is wrong.

Citing an example: Some companies advertise for job vacancies

while they have already chosen somebody. This is used as eyewash. Similarly the fatalistic people think that even before we do the action or in spite of our action, the Lord already determined the result or destiny and therefore we are totally helpless. Swamiji says you cannot accept this fatalistic approach, as you cannot choose your result.

Sri Krishna does not mean our effort is in vain. All Karmas result in appropriate result (s). Sri Krishna says the result is , however, not determined by your effort alone. There are many other factors that contribute as well. Yours is only one of the contributing factors.

Another example cited was of a washer man who opened his business in a village. After some time he realized the village was a Digambara village.

Citing another example: We all attend this Vedanta class. I and other shishyas come because of the Guru. Guru comes because of the Shishyas. If there are no Shishyas then there is no Guru. Thus, our class has Students and Teacher as contributing factors. I am contributing to the class; however, I am not the only one contributing. Others are contributing factors as well. All these other factors together are known as fate or God's will.

Thus: My Free will + Fate (other contributing factors)=Result.

If you can predict all other contributing factors you can predict the result. Meteorologists try to predict weather where there are many variables. Thus, there are many factors. Some are known, some are unknown, some are controllable and some are uncontrollable. Hence, I can never predict the result.

Swamiji says, “ Don't make your happiness depend upon unpredictable factors. If you do so, your happiness will also be unpredictable. **Rather, you should focus on enjoying the performance of action itself.**”

This will be much more meaningful. If you play tennis, you enjoy the game. Result of the game is insignificant. In this process your health will also improve. **Make every action a great experience.**

Citing another example, Swamiji says, he took a group on tour to Amaranth. The lingam there is an ice lingam as such dependent on weather. Will we see the lingam or not, it was not sure. Our whole journey was wonderful, as we decided upfront whether we saw the lord or not was not important. There were complaints. In some instances there were no toilets to use. Nevertheless, it was a great journey because of the attitude we took to the journey.

Enjoy every action and internal growth will occur. Do not worry about the results or external accomplishments. "Inner growth" is in your hands. Outer result is not in your hands. Let not motive be focused on material gain, which is unpredictable. If material gain is the focus, life will be full of ups and downs. Focus should be on the very action that you are performing.

When I face a few failures one tends to become fatalistic. I want to avoid failure. So, you don't attempt anything anymore. In this line of thinking, keep in mind, that this **Inaction** means you lose opportunity for inner growth. Sri Krishna describes this further in the 6th chapter.

Withdrawal also contributes to growth. However, keep in mind that, what "Activity" can contribute "Withdrawal" cannot contribute. In its initial stages of spiritual growth, action alone helps, as in Grihastha-ashrama. Later in life, Vanaprastha, or withdrawal, helps. Action is most important. Withdrawal is only of secondary importance.

Shloka 48:

"Giving up attachment and established in Yoga, with evenness of mind in success and failure, perform works, O Arjuna. This

evenness is Yoga. “

Have a proper attitude towards material gain. It should be subservient to inner growth. Material gain or loss will not then result in turmoil of mind. Samsara loses its capacity to disturb you.

Adopt a different attitude to life. Learn lessons from failures.

That is why even though ten people failed in a particular field, all the people were not uniformly agitated. One person thought of committing suicide. Second person was disturbed and could not sleep; however a third person said failure is a part of life and I have learnt a good lesson. The third person's approach indicates inner maturity.

Citing example of the executive who was very successful.

They interviewed him and asked; what is the secret of your success. And he said, Right Decision. And then they asked the question; what is the secret of your Right Decision? He said experience in life. What is the secret of your experience in life; He said, wrong decisions. Therefore, even though you may consider it as a wrong decision, it is just an experience.

This mental balance is called Samatvam. One who values inner growth has Samatvam. In prosperity and adversity great people enjoy mental balance. Example of the rising sun was cited.

When the Sun is rising, it is bloody in color and when the sun is about to set, it is also bloody. Often, when you get a picture of the Sun, you will not know whether it is a rising Sun or setting Sun. Be like the Sun, ups and downs will come.

Main indicator of a Karma Yogi is his mental balance. Do your duty or work with mental balance. There is no risk- less action. There is also no risk- less life. Yet maintain mental balance. Shift your attachment from “material growth” to

"Inner or spiritual growth". It is an attachment that is permitted by the Shastras. Be equanimous, in both success and failure.

Definition of Karma Yoga: It is a particular state of mind.

Shloka # 49:

" Work impelled by the desire for fruit is indeed far inferior, evenness of mind being far above it. O Arjuna, Take refuge in the evenness of intelligence. Pitiful are those impelled by the desire for the fruits of works."

Here Sri Krishna is contrasting two types of people, a Karmi and a Karma Yogi.

Karmi is a materialistic person who does not value inner growth. People die of failure as well as success.

The materialist gets kicked both in success and failure, at both extremes, and therefore he suffers; whereas a Karma Yogi is one who is balanced both in success and failure;

Karma of a materialist is far inferior to the Karma yoga (Budhi yoga) of a Karma Yogi. Main focus of Karma Yoga is on the value or attitude towards action and not on the action itself; hence it also called Budhi Yoga.

Therefore, Arjuna, resort to Karma Yoga. Cultivate proper attitude. Those who do not have this attitude (Karmi's), they are unfortunate. They go through a lot of stress, strain and anxiety in life.

Shloka # 50:

"With the intelligence of evenness one discards (in this world) both good and evil works (i.e the merits and demerits of works). Therefore strive to secure this Yoga; Yoga is skill in works."

Here Sri Krishna points out results of Karma Yoga. One who has a proper attitude, a clear visioned person, a Karma Yogi; he will ultimately become a Gyana Yogi. He alone analyses life experiences and will realize that he wants permanent happiness.

I am seeking happiness and fulfillment from material or finite things, a path which is useless. He will realize this and come to gyana yoga. Then, he will transcend all Karma Phalas by discovering his Atma Swaroopa. He then gives up happiness and sorrow.

Thus: Karma Yoga>Gyana Yoga> Gyanam> Moksha.

Living as a Karmi you will just keep going round and round in the chain of life and death.

May you take to Karma Yoga. It is the efficient performance of action or "Skill in action".

With Best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Kaivalya Upanishad, Class 3

Greetings All,

Swamiji said in his previous introduction we saw Upanishad means Atma Vidhya or Brahma Vidhya as it brings Jivatma and Paramatma together. This process brings the Seeker and Sought together and thus Samsara is destroyed.

Sat + Upani means wisdom inside us. It is the primary

meaning. A secondary meaning of Upanishad is that it is a Vedantic textbook that leads to knowledge. The book is external or outside of us and it should lead to the internal Upanishad or Pramanam.

Kaivalya means Moksha. It originates from Kevala that means: Whatever is without a second, Purnaha, Non Dual, Infinite, Fulfillment, Fullness and Limitlessness.

Any sorrow is a sense of incompleteness. In Tamil the word Kurai is used for incompleteness and Niraiv means fullness.

Anandatvam means unexpressed happiness. Ananda is expressed Anandatvam. So Kaivalya is an Upanishad that gives you Ananda. It also removes daily struggles and samsara. This Upanishad ends with Kaivalyam or Ananda.

This is a small Upanishad belonging to the Atharvana Veda. Mundaka also belongs to Atharvana Veda. Katho belongs to Krishna Yajur. Each group of Upanishads has a common Shanthipatha respectively. Thus, Mundaka Shantipatha is same as Kaivalya.

Shantipatha is a prayer to Lord. It has to be chanted together by the Guru and Shishyas. In the Shanthipatha the Student is asking for favors from the Lord.

The first favor asked for is a long life. The purpose of a long life is to complete mission of Moksha Prapthihi.

The second favor is fitness of entire personality or a fit body, mind and intellect complex.

The third favor is ability to pursue a spiritual life, once I have a long life and a fit personality. These include study of scriptures and know the glory of Lord. If you know the glory of Lord, you will also know it is your own glory. God realization is Self-realization. May I have Shastra Vichara?

Fourth and final favor is freedom from all obstacles. Our

papams do not allow us to do good things. They become obstacles, known as Prathibandhu Nivritihi.

Swamiji says the Shanthipatha is a good mantra to chant to remove obstacles from our self (we have control), immediate surroundings (some control) and Supernatural forces (no control).

Chapter 1, Mantra # 1:

Upanishads are in the form of a dialogue. Sometimes names of Guru and Shishya are not provided. In Kaivalya Upanishad it is provided.

Ashvalayana is a Rig Veda Acharya. He approached the Guru, Parameshthi or Brahmaji, the Lord or Creator of the universe.

When did he approach the Guru? He approached him after acquiring the necessary qualification to understand the knowledge of Brahman or Sadhana Chatushtaya Sampathi. He acquired this by Karma Yoga, obtaining purity of mind and by Upasana Yoga, acquiring focusing capacity of mind.

He approached the Guru with great reverence. Gita says namaskara indicates lack of intellectual arrogance, Shradha and Bhakthi.

He then asked for this knowledge. Scriptures say knowledge should not be given to one who is not interested in it. Only a shishya who is interested and who asks with proper reverence is to be given this knowledge.

Mantra # 1 (continued):

Ashvalayana said: " Hey Bhagawan, May you teach me Brahma Vidya."

The word Adhihi is not teaching, rather it means loud remembrance. So, please remember loudly. Swamiji says you cannot teach another person if he is not ready to learn. You

can only facilitate the conditions of learning. The student must have capacity to absorb. Just like a plant, I can only provide conditions but plant must have the potential. “ You please remember loudly. I will sit and absorb about Brahma Vidya”.

Other aspects of shloka are about glorification of Brahma Vidya indicating it is a sincere request.

Glorification:

First: It is a great wisdom.

Even if we seek other knowledge, it should be studied with the aim of refining our intellect. Having refined my mind from other sciences, I have pursued Brahma Vidya as a goal. Of all the goals, it is the greatest goal. Spiritual growth happens gradually; Like a mother nourishing a child, gradually. Similarly, my mind should be nourished for Sadhana Chatushtaya Sampathi.

Second: Everybody should be seeking wisdom, even though many do not. They do not know its value, since they are not mature. We tend to chase after materialistic things rather than Brahma Vidya.

Third: The Brahma Vidya is most secret wisdom. Very few people know it.

Fourth: All Papam's are destroyed. Punyam is included in papam. Punyam is a golden chain, while papam is of steel, says Swamiji. Both lead to the cycle of life and death.

Fifth: Through this wisdom an individual obtains Purusha or Truth. By knowledge alone he attains Brahman.

To obtain something you should know it first then go and get it. Brahma Vidya is different in that knowledge is known and got at the same time as this knowledge was missing due to ignorance.

Knowledge clears the imaginary distance.

Citing an example, the lost car key is ignorance of the key in your pocket. Knowledge is that key was not lost. This is also called Prapasya Prapthihi.

What type of Brahman is it? One who is beyond Maya (Parat Para or Maya Para) or the Consciousness principle.

Who gets this knowledge? The wise person attains Brahman. Such a Brahma Vidya, please teach me as well.

Mantra #2:

Parameshti, grand sire of the universe, addressed the student. He teaches the means of obtaining the Brahma Vidya.

There are two means:

1. Direct via Gyana Yoga and Vedanta Vichara
2. Supportive means.

Citing an example: Direct is the seed that produces the plant. However, it also needs the supportive means of proper soil, water and sunlight.

Vedanta Vichara involves Sravanam, Mananam and Nididhyasanam.

Sravanam: Consists of systematic study of scriptures for a length of time under a competent teacher. This gives gyanam.

Mananam: Intellectual exercise that removes all doubts that obstruct convictions. Conviction alone can give Gyanam.

Nididhyasanam:

This removes emotional obstruction or unhealthy ways of thinking and responding. Kama, Krodha, Mada and Moha are examples. Thus they are:

1. kama – lust
2. krodha – anger
3. lobha – greed
4. moha – delusory emotional attachment or temptation
5. mada or ahankara – pride, hubris
6. matsarya – envy, jealousy

Nididhyasanam removes emotional barriers.

Through these three approaches, may you get knowledge.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Kaivalya Upanishad, Class 2

Swamiji continued with his introductory talk. He talked about necessity of self-inquiry. Our idea of our selves and vision of scriptures about us are different. I feel “I am full of defects”. I am searching to free myself of these defects. Scriptures say, “You are free of Doshas.” There is a contradiction between what I am and what scriptures say.

The instrument to know this knowledge (via self enquiry) is known as Pramanam. There are five types of Pramanam's also known as Pancha Pramanani. All these are Paurusheya Pramanani or human instruments.

The Pancha Pramanani are:

pratyaksha = direct perception or cognition

anumana = inference, reasoning, deduction

agamah = authority, testimony, validation, competent evidence

pramanani = valid means of knowing, proofs, sources of correct knowing

viparyaya = Incorrect knowledge or illusion. Perceiving a thing as being other than what it really is.

Other than Pratyaksha all other four instruments are derived from perceptual data. Can anyone of them help me with self-enquiry? All five are human instruments and are extrovert in nature. Thus, an eye can see outside but not itself. Science also depends on extrovert sense organs. When we get data based on objective world, knowledge will be of the object. What I need is subjective data. The five instruments are inadequate for Self Knowledge. Every instrument can perform only in its field of operation. Self is not in the field of any instrument.

Why not meditate and get knowledge? Stopping thought cannot produce any new knowledge. Available instruments do not help. Meditation also does not do it. What should I do?

There is a sixth Pramanam. It is not of human origin. It is from outside. It is called Shabda Pramanam. It is a spoken or oral pramanam.

Shabda Pramanam are of two types:

- Laukika Shabda Pramanam, of human origin.
- Shastriya Shabda Pramanam that comes from God.

Laukika pramanam can only deal with objects. Example given was gravitational force. How did newton get this knowledge? He got it from Paurusheya pramanam or from human evidence.

Shastriya Pramanam is unique and is meant for revealing my true nature. Veda is a unique instrument of knowledge. It is not available from any other source. One who is performing self-enquiry has to use Shastriya Shabda Pramanam. When eye cannot see it self unless you use a mirror. Using the mirror,

this is wisdom. I use Shastriya knowledge or Upanishad or Vedanta as a Pramana or mirror. Shastriya knowledge is looking into myself or looking inwards. The clearer I look the clearer is my knowledge. So, I need to study Shastriya Pramanam thoroughly.

Now there are some difficulties in obtaining this clarity of understanding.

Primary difficulty is our own habits. We always assume Shastra is talking about a new object. So, we tend to objectify it and then want to experience the object. We, thus obtain a bookish knowledge, while what we need is experiential knowledge.

Why does this mistake happen? Because we think Brahman is a new object without realizing that it is my own true nature. I should own up to my true nature. Our method of listening to Shastras also should be somewhat different, therefore Shastras insist upon following:

1. You require a Guru. He will constantly point out Brahman is You and not outside.
2. Since I, the self, am an observer, I am different from everything else, observed. I am unique. I cannot be observed. For this we do not have an example to fall back upon. Scriptures use of peculiar methods of communication that makes it difficult to comprehend. Words like dvaita and advaita are often used. Extracting information from scriptures is not easy and a specific method is followed. This method is called Sampradya or mimamsa or Vichara. The scriptures have six indicators that tell me what is the revelation about my true nature. The six indicators are known as Tatparya Lingani. The six indicators reveal the central theme of Upanishads. It requires study of beginning portion (Upakrama) and ending portion (Upasamhara) and this reveals what is in central portion as well. An example of this is, while listening to the news in TV or Radio;

the main points are brought out at beginning and end of the news.

A good speaker should follow the following rules for the six indicators

1. Upakrama and Upasamhara.
2. Abhyasa or repetition. An aspect of scripture is repeated again and again indicating its importance.
3. Apoorvata or Uniqueness. Scriptures reveal what science cannot reveal. Science cannot study consciousness. Vedanta reveals about consciousness and the observer. The subject is not available to science.
4. Phalam: The benefits. The study of scriptures provides benefits. Also called Prayojanam from Advaitam.
5. Arthavadaha: Ninda stuthi. This means glorification and criticism. If you look at yourself as a finite being it should be condemned. If you consider yourself infinite, it should be glorified.
6. Upapathihi: Knowledge supported by logic. It is not a blind logic. Example: Scriptures say life in heaven is eternal. This is illogical. Whatever is acquired in time is also lost in time. Consciousness is eternal. It is logical. It cannot be disproved.

These above six are called Shat-tatparya -Lingani.

The body, mind and world are perishable. Behind the Observed, is the consciousness. Example: Camera is not in photo; does not mean camera does not exist. So, also, proof of object is proof of consciousness.

Aham Brahma Asmi. If I get this knowledge I need not get anything else for Poornatvam. So struggles for Poornatvam (or end of samsara) will also end. Therefore end of Vedas is called Vedantaha. It is also called Gyana Kandam or Atma Vidya or Brahma Vidya.

After this knowledge all my struggles end. Giving example of

puri (the flat bread), the flat dough when it is placed in hot oil rises up and becomes a big round puri. It is so with us too. Now, I live with Poornathvam and life becomes a Lila.

Hence it is called Upani-shad. Upani means wisdom or bringing together (you and knowledge).

This wisdom, Upanishad, occurs at end of each of the four Vedas. Since a Guru is compulsory, A Guru Shishya dialogue occurs in all Upanishads.

Ashvalayana is a Guru. Even Rama and Krishna had Guru's. One or a group of dialogues is called Upanishad. Originally many Vedas were reportedly there. Many were lost in time. Now there are supposed to be 280 Upanishads. Of these 11 are very important and Shankaracharya, Ramanuja and other Acharyas wrote commentaries on them. Of these 11, six are usually studied. They are: Isha, Kena, Mandukya, Katha, Prasna and Brihadaranyaka. Kaivalya is over and above the six. Between these seven Upanishads the essence of Vedanta is imparted. Kaivalya belongs to Atharvana Veda.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta Class 24

Shloka # 45:

"The scope of vedas embraces the three-fold force of nature, O Arjuna! Go beyond these three forces. He who has mastered the self rises beyond all dualities."

Continuing his teaching swamiji reminded us about shloka # 45.

Prarabhda Karma will still impact us. Strengthen your mind to withstand the ups and downs of life or the dvandas. Dvandas are dualities of opposites such as joy and sorrow or heat and cold. When we have problems we resort to Karmas by going to an astrologer or Vastu Shastri etc.

Swamiji says we need to reduce our Kamya Karmas or Prayaschitta Karmas. May you maintain your Satva Guna or Viveka shakthi. Dharma and Moksha are more important than Artha and Kama. Nithya Anithya Viveka is important as also Sathya Guna. This spiritual growth is accomplished by associating with Mahatmas, attending Satsang and reading of sacred books.

Swamiji reminded us that we get addicted to things such as coffee or watching TV. When all over the house, they have television; children will think that life is impossible without television. We start off with using something, then it becomes a need, and soon after we need it so much we cannot survive without it. This is a habit or even can become an addiction. This then also becomes a shackle, which I myself have put on. We need to get out of such shackles.

Discussing Yoga and Kshema, Swamiji says, we need certain things for survival and they are called yoga or Apraptya Prapthihi. Kshema means, now I have to protect all my acquisitions. Acquisition and their preservation are the concern of Yoga Kshema and they take up a lot of our time. Thus, we are concerned; will our children take care of us? Nevertheless, our sense of insecurity does not leave us. Swamiji says, this feeling is an internal mental issue only. What we call security, is it really security? Keep in mind her own security staff killed even a Prime Minister. True security lies in our inner strength or wisdom or devotion. Transcend your worries and become a Karma Yogi. Drop concerns about Yoga Kshema. Invoke your Ishta Devata (Outer God) and pray to him or invoke your inner strength (inner God) and face the situation.

Describing Atmavan, swamiji says: Be alert, don't lead a mechanical life. Don't lead a sheepish life. Let it be a deliberate life. While we work, earn, grow a family etc., they are all just steps of a process. Keep the end goal in mind. Don't be carried away by all these in-process steps at any stage of life. Keep end goal in mind.

Shloka # 46:

"For a knower of Brahman who has realized the ultimate truth, there is much profit from all the Vedas as there is profit from reservoirs when all around there is an inundation."

Here Sri Krishna talks about rewards of a Karma Yogi. Karma Yoga is an "Alert Life". The reward of this life is Moksha. In the Moksha Ananda experienced by a Yogi, you do not lose worldly pleasures. They are included in moksha ananda. Karma Kanda talks of a variety of rituals for various pleasures. Gyana Kanda talks of moksha or infinite pleasures. In the Infinite the finite is included. Example: There is a small pond of water. Nearby, there is a large lake. The large lake brings all benefits of small pond and more while small pond cannot provide all benefits of the large lake.

Thus, all benefits of Karma Kanda are gained in the moksha of a wise man. Therefore Arjuna choose moksha, become a Karma Yogi.

Shloka # 47:

"to work alone you have the right and never to the fruits (of works). Don't be impelled by the fruits of works; (at the same time) don't be tempted to withdraw from works."

This is an important verse and provides the principle of karma yoga.

Swamiji, defining a Karma Yogi says:

We act in the world. This is called Karma.

Karma Phalam is the result of our action.

We must have a healthy attitude towards our actions.

Attitude depends on understanding.

When we respect a person it is based upon knowledge of the person. Without cognitive changes attitudinal changes are not possible. Cognitive change means understanding a situation. As per Sri Krishna, as human beings, we have the "free will" or choice. Animals live by instinct. They do not have a goal or learn from experience. So, in our actions, our free will or choice should be used wisely. With respect to Phala or result of one's actions, you do not have a choice. Thus, one should know which is choice-ful or which is choice-less action.

Given a choice-ful situation, act on your choice intelligently.

Given a choice-less situation, accept it intelligently, as well.

When Sri Krishna says you don't have a choice with respect to the results of your actions, what he means is, you do not have a "total" choice. Very often, you are just one of the contributing factors. Thus, in farming, you may till the land, sow the seed, water it etc., but you have no control on the cyclone that comes through damaging the crop. So Sri Krishna is suggesting that we do not become optimistic or pessimistic but be more a realist or a rational person. In group decisions the individual has limited responsibility. Thus, in an election, I may vote for a candidate, however that person may not win. Many others also influence an election. However, this does not mean you should not vote. Your vote is very important, although the result may not be to your choosing. Therefore, our efforts do help determine the result, but keep in mind that there are other factors impacting the situation as well.

Don't stop action. However, be prepared for any type of result. Not just you, but other factors also determine the result. So, hope for the best and prepare for the worst. Do

not think your actions are a waste; they are very important. Be prepared, however, that the result may not be to your expectation. Just pray “ O God, give me the strength to accept the consequences gracefully.”

With Best wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy