

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 16

Greetings All,

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 9, Shloka # 1:

The practice of what is right and proper, as fixed by the scriptural texts, is to be done along with reading the texts oneself and propagating the truths of the same. "Truth", meaning practicing in life what is to be understood to be right and proper, is to be pursued along with regular studies and preaching. Penance, study, and preaching; control of the senses, study and preaching; tranquility, study and preaching; the "maintenance of fire", study and preaching; offering oblations in fire sacrifice, study and preaching of the Vedas; serving the guests, study and preaching; the performance of duties towards man, study and preaching; duties towards children, study and preaching of the Vedas; procreation, study and preaching; propagation of the race, study and preaching; all these are things to be practiced sincerely. Satyavaca, son of Rathitara, holds that truth alone is to be strictly practiced. Taponitya, a son of Purusista declares that penance alone is to be practiced. Naka, son of Modgala, holds the view that the study and preaching of the Vedas alone is to be practiced; that verily, is penance; aye that is penance.

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad, Swami Paramarthananda said, we are now in the last portion of Anuvakaha # 9. Here the teacher is emphasizing Karma Yoga and Values. Karma Yoga primarily consists of Pancha Maha Yagna. It includes Brahma Yagna, Pitr Yagna, Deva Yagna, Manusha Yagna and Bhuta Yagna. Of these five Bhuta Yagna has not been mentioned by the Upanishad, so we have to fill that gap ourselves. Values such as Ritum, Satyam, Tapas, Dama, Sama, Agni and Sacred fires are mentioned. Anuvakaha # 9 is concluding by emphasizing one specific Sadhana. All Sadhana's are important and required like nutrition for a body.

Similarly, all values are important for our spirit as well. Different people will require different Sadhanas. In scriptures, in a particular context, a particular value is highlighted. Sometimes some values are even criticized for glorifying a particular value. All values in fact are important. Mundako Upanishad emphasizes “Satyam Eva Jayate as follows:

*satyameva jayate nāṇṛtaṁ
satyena panthā vitato devayānaḥ
yenākramantyṛṣayo hyāptakāmā
yatra tat satyasya paramaṁ nidhānam^[4]*

Here Satyam is considered a most important Value. In Chapter 3 of Taittiriya Upanishad Tapas is highlighted. It says Tapas is Brahman himself. Similarly Svadhyaya Pravachanam also has been highlighted in this Anuvakaha # 9 by its repeated mention. In the end of the shloka the Upanishad imagines three different Rishis and asks them for their important values. The Upanishad gives its verdict on the choice of the Rishi's as well. We will now hear from the Rishi's as well as hear the verdict of the Upanishads.

The first Rishi named Satyavacha specializes in the value of Satyam. He was son of Rathitara. Satyavacha meant one who speaks the truth. He says truthfulness is the highest value. The word Satyam has two meanings. One related to ethics and morality; and another related to philosophy.

Shikshavalli is a dharma and shastra related chapter as such Satyam here means the verbal discipline of truth. Satyam also occurs in the next chapter of this Upanishad known as Brahmananda-valli. In this chapter Satyam means “Reality is pure existence”. So the meaning of Satyam can vary depending upon context.

Then comes another Rishi who says Tapas is most important value. His name is Taponitya. He was son of Purushishta. He

led a life of austerity and self-denial. He felt penance was the highest Sadhana.

The third Rishi was Naka son of Mudgala. He said Svadhyaya i.e., the study and sharing of scriptures was the highest Sadhana.

The Upanishad giving its verdict says that Svadhyaya Pravachanam is the highest Sadhana. The first two instructions coming out of the Vedas are:

- Study the scriptures, then
- Through the knowledge of scriptures provide instructions to all. It can also be stated as use Vedas for Life instructions.

Even Patnaji's Ashtanga Yoga says, one should take up meditation only after a study of scriptures. Meditation is only prescribed in the seventh stage of Ashtanga Yoga. First three stages are Svadhyaya. Thus, Svadhyaya teaches us the theory before the practice.

With this Anuvakaha # 9 is over.

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 10, Shloka # 1:

I am the stimulator in the tree of universe. My fame (glory) is high as the peaks of the mountains. High and pure am I like the essence in the sun; I am the power and wealth, effulgent with intuition. Intelligent, imperishable and undecaying am I, this is the scared recitation of Trishanku after he realized the Truth.

This is a small Anuvakaha. In previous Anuvakaha the Upanishad talked about Karma and Upasana. Karma deals with body's actions and Upasana deals with mental actions. All Karmas and Upasanas have two fold benefits. They are:

They are often practiced for material prosperity in Ihaloka as well as Paraloka. Thus, Sakama Karmas are performed to obtain

these material blessings. Karmas practiced for spiritual punyam is another category. These help one with becoming Sadhana Chatustaya Sampana. One can also ask for Guru prapthi. A Guru is required to obtain the knowledge for Gyanam. One can also ask for the blessing of Sravanam of scriptures.

Suppose a man is interested in moksha alone, what does he do? For a mumukshu the Upanishad gives us a special shloka for Gyana Prapthi. It is a Japaha meant for atmagyanartham. Previous shlokas were all for Gyana Yogyata prapthi. Trishanku Rishi gave this mantra. He gave this shloka after gaining Atma Gyanam. In this shloka the word Veda means Atma Gyanam.

What is Trishanku's declaration? He says, whatever be the glory of Brahman they are all my glories alone. He says, "Aham Brahma Asmi". I am Satyam jnanam anantam brahma. I am jagat karanam. In Gita, chapter # 10, it says, all glories belong to Ishwara. Here, Trishanku says, all glories belong to me. By repeating the Rishi's declaration I am practicing this statement, as I still do not have the Gyanam.

How long do you want to be in bondage, asks Trishanku? Slavery or bondage is Samsara. From Ishwara Dasa one has to become Ishwara Aikyam. This is the conversion from Dvaitam to Advaitam. Aham Brahma Asmi is the ultimate truth.

Trishnaku says:

Aham Reriva: I am the activator, life giver of the Samsara tree.

Brahman is the nourishing root of universe. Without my support the world cannot exist. Dream cannot exist without the Waker. I support the universe, as the universe does not have an existence of its own. Dream world exists due to the witness consciousness. I lend Sat and Chit to the Universe. Consciousness of body is reflected consciousness (RC). I am OC

(original consciousness) lending RC to the body. I am Vishwa-adharam. My glory (of god) is glory of creation. It is as high as the peak of a mountain (Prashtam Gireriva).

I am purest of pure. I am absolutely pure. Explaining purity, through Prayaschita karma one gets relative purity. Gyanam, however, makes me absolutely pure. By relative purity, it means I can become impure again. Gyanam gives me a purity that is permanent. The word Urddhvam means absolute.

Thus, I am also immortal or eternal, like the light of the Sun, which is also eternal. The word Vaaji means the Sun. He, the sun, nourishes annum (rice). How did I get all this name and fame?

I have the greatest wealth called brilliant Atma Gyanam. Why is Atma Gyanam brilliant? It is brilliant because it removes darkness. Atma Gyanam is a wealth that cannot be destroyed by giving it to others as such I have real wealth. Sumedha means I have the best knowledge that “ I am Brahman.” It illumines everything. Minds are many but “I” the consciousness is one and it illumines all of them. I am eternal and immortal. I am free from decay (Akshaya). The word “ I am “ has another meaning. It also means I am soaked in syrup of immortal wisdom. So, the essence of this shloka is “ Aham Brahma Asmi”. Trishanku declared this.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Footnote on Satyam Eva Jayate:

*satyameva jayate nānṛtaṁ
satyena panthā vitato devayānaḥ
yenākramantyṛṣayo hyāptakāmā
yatra tat satyasya paramaṁ nidhānam^[4]*

In English

Truth alone triumphs; not falsehood.
Through truth the divine path is spread out
by which the sages whose desires have been completely
fulfilled,
reach to where is that supreme treasure of Truth.^[5]

Bhawat Geeta, Class 84: Chapter 6, Verses 7 & 8

Greetings All,

सर्वज्ञात्मा सर्वभूतहिते रतः
सर्वभूतहिते रतः सर्वज्ञात्मा सर्वभूतहिते रतः 6.7

The supreme Self is concentrated for one who has subdued the self and is quiescent, in cold and heat, in pleasure and pain, and in honor and disgrace.

Continuing his teaching of the Gita Swami Paramarthananda said, in chapter six Sri Krishna is talking about general preparations to be followed by a meditator. He prescribes four disciplines called Samanya sadhanani and they are:

1. First Bahirange Sadhana: Is maintaining a balanced mind while conducting day-to-day transactions. Violent agitations of mind will register and later come up during meditation. One should avoid such violent agitations of mind. This state is called Samatvam. To achieve this Samatvam one has to follow Karma Yoga as described in Chapter # 3.
2. The Second Bahiranga Sadhana is having Self Confidence.

One without self-confidence cannot be helped by anybody including God, Guru or the Shastras. Self-Grace is paramount. This Self Grace is Self-confidence and it is also called Atma Kripa.

3. The Third Bahiranga Sadhana is Self Effort. Fate or destiny oriented person will always fall back upon fate. He will say, " If God wants me to get liberated, this effort is not required. If God has decided I should not get liberated, then my efforts are in vain." This is fatalistic thinking. Sri Krishna does not accept this approach. He says individual effort is required. In fact, individual effort alone will help in tapping the grace of the Lord, therefore, the third value is self-effort.
4. The Fourth Bahiranga Sadhana is Self-mastery or Self Management.

Every organ that is given to me is an instrument gifted by the Lord to me. The physical body is an instrument; the sense organs of knowledge and action are instruments; my mind is a wonderful instrument, and above all my intellect is the most powerful instrument. By using these instruments I can accomplish anything in life. Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, all the four purusharthas are accessible to me, if only I am willing to put these organs to proper use. This requires above all that the organs remain healthy. An unhealthy body, an unhealthy mind and intellect cannot accomplish anything. Therefore, every organ should be healthy. They also must function in coordination as well. Citing an example, if intellect says, "attend Gita class" and you attend. But in the class, if the mind wanders off then the mind and intellect are not integrated. All organs should function in harmony. The healthy and harmonious function of the organs is self-mastery.

Sri Krishna says if these four attributes, that is, Equanimity, Self effort, Self confidence and Self mastery are in place one can attain spiritual success. His mind is relaxed

and free from turmoil and extroverted-ness. For such a person recognizing the Self is very easy. He can make use of scriptures to know his own Atma. By following scriptures one can get Atma easily. Why is it so? Because, scriptures say the Atma is available to us all the time. It is not as if it is only available at certain times. Some objects such as higher Lokas, Devatas etc. can be accessed only by meditation. However, the Atma is always available to me, in all the different states of waking, sleep, dream and turiya. In what form is it available to us? It is available to us in the form of Consciousness. Every word I utter is creating thoughts in the person hearing me. Through out them all, there is one non-variable principle called Consciousness. It is the one aware of each thought rising in mind.

It is like the light that is pervading the hall. The people are coming and going; but in and through the arrival and departure of the people the one common factor is the light because of which I am aware of the arrival of people, as well as their departure. In fact, if there is one principle, which is ever available, that is consciousness.

Consciousness is ever available in the most ordinary state. We just need to turn our mind to it.

If we look at the hand, we will see lines in the palm, the nails etc. but we never say there is a light on the hand. In doing this we are turning our attention to this light, which is always there. We are looking at the ever-present light principle.

Similarly, Vedanta is not revealing a new Atma rather Vedanta is turning my attention to the already and ever- evident consciousness. And why should I turn my attention? At present moment my attention is in the thoughts that are occurring in the mind. Either I am worried about kama, krodhah, greed and so on. So instead of turning my attention to a particular thought in the mind I am turning my attention to the

consciousness because of which I am aware of every thought.

This turning of attention can be done only if the mind is calm and without turbulence. Therefore, a lot of effort is required to enjoy a calm mind. An extrovert cannot listen. Self is Consciousness. Kenopanishad beautifully says that Atma is evident all the time. You do not have to go to a special meditation to experience the Atma. Just as I do not have to perform a special meditation to recognize the light, because the light is experienced in and through every experience, similarly, the Consciousness does not require any special state of mind, or any special meditation; it is available to us all the time.

If you ask a man with a relaxed mind, when is Consciousness evident, he will ask you back when is it not evident? This recognition has to occur in two stages.

First stage is turn attention from thought to Consciousness. It is like turning the attention from hand to the light. Thus, we turn from changing thought to the changeless witness.

Second stage occurs when I recognize Consciousness, then my tendency will be to say, "I am the body, mind complex and I have consciousness that illumines my thought." Now Vedanta says that you have to train your mind and reverse the approach. Vedanta wants us to say:

" I am the Consciousness principle and the body mind complex is an incidental instrument used by me". This is the biggest shift and most important shift. Meditation is meant to make this shift.

Please remember the five points I have said regarding consciousness in the past:

- Consciousness is not a part, product or property of the

body.

- Consciousness is an entity distinctive from the body, which pervades the body.
- The dimensions of the body do not bind consciousness.
- Consciousness survives even after the body goes; and the surviving consciousness cannot transact, not because it is absent but because the medium of transaction is not there, anymore.

This is the description of consciousness and that consciousness is my nature. We also know this from our day-to-day experiences. The end of transactions is not the end of my existence. If end of transaction is the end of existence; what will happen? During sleep, I am dead; but I know during sleep I am not dead; I am very much alive; even though I do not do any transaction. Extend this to death also. After death also, I do not transact but non-transaction is not non-existence. And therefore I exist all the time. I exist with and without transaction. End of transaction is not end of existence. Transacting instruments come and go, but I exist. This is discovering the real "I". So this is called Atma gyanam. This is called discovering the real I. This is called owning up to the real "I". And when I own up to this real "I", what is the benefit I get? Sri Krishna says such a wise person is unaffected by all the pairs of opposites happening in his life; like heat and cold; favorable condition and unfavorable condition; none of them shake him. Manam and apamanam is a very big issue for human beings; we are very worried about our social status and respect. Even Manam and Apamanam do not shake the wise person. Gyanam gives us immunity from all this.

Shloka # 8:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ 6.8 ॥

That yogin is said to be integrated whose self is content with knowledge and experience, who is immutable, and who has subdued his senses and to whom clod, stone and gold are all alike.

This disciplined person goes through stages of knowledge. First he goes to Gyanam also called Paroksha Gyanam and then he goes to Vigyanam. Both Gyanam and Vigyanam have different meanings. When I say, " I am the body" it is Gyanam. Consciousness is considered a part of the body. At least I know there is consciousness, hence it is called Gyanam. Vigyanam is when I say, " I am the consciousness principle and I have the instrument called body mind complex". When I have body mind complex I can transact. When I don't have body mind complex I cannot transact. The body mind complex is like a spectacle.

Spectacles have got two glasses; when I put them on I am able to see and transact with the world. When I remove the spectacle, I do not transact, but remember, I continue to exist. In the same way, our body and mind are like the two glasses of this spectacle and when I use the body and mind, I have the waking state experience, or dream state experience; when the body and mind are relaxed and resolved, I do not have waking and dream state. Therefore I do not have any transaction; but even without transaction; I continue to exist; and therefore body and mind are more an instrument than myself. And this attitudinal change, the change of identification, is called Vigyanam.

Only when this shift takes place, only when I shift my "I" identification from the body to atma, then alone my sense of limitation will go.

People may ask why should I know the Atma? Why develop a new identification with Atma? If you are comfortable with the body identity, Vedanta says good luck. Reality is, with body identity, I have fear of mortality, disease etc. It becomes a

constant companion. We are also afraid of the death of our near and dear ones. Samsara is fear of death or old age or of disease. If I am OK with these fears then it is OK to identify with the body.

If not, change. There is no medicine to cure all these (death, disease and old age). Even gerontologists are old and many are dead. There is no medicine to provide immortality. Otherwise, go to Vedanta and find out that you are a higher being, ever free, ever beautiful etc. You have to discover the Atma. With that life becomes relaxed. There is no more fear of death, disease etc. They don't belong to "Me".

Who can get this knowledge? Only one who has mastered himself. He is unshaken by anything that happens in life. We can't predict our future. Some things are predictable but uncontrollable. Future is either unpredictable or uncontrollable. So any event can come as a shock. Sri Krishna says Gyanam is our Kavacham. The wise man is not affected by such incidents.

Marriage ceremony has a ritual that says, " May your mind be strong enough to face all types of situations". The Girl is leaving her house and going to an unknown house. Unless one is strong it can be traumatic. Wiseman is able to withstand such traumas and is called a Yogi (man of wisdom). He enjoys an equanimous mind towards: Mud (of no value); b) Stone, of some value; c) gold, of great value. He has samatvam towards all the three. Does he see them all the same way? He sees them the same way because he is free from Raga and Dvesha (attachment and aversion). Why does he not have Raga or Dvesha? When does one get attached? When one gets happiness, fullness or it improves your situation it causes Raga. And when does hatred come in? When object reduces my security and happiness. For a Gyani, his fulfillment is not from objects, money, status etc. He is full by nature. If he is full, nothing can increase or decrease his fullness. It is just like the ocean. If things come it is good, if things go, that too is OK. We are happy

when our children are dependent on us. When they are independent, we are unhappy that they are not dependent on us. So make your self psychologically independent.

Take away:

Teaching us a practical technique to reach the divine within us, Swamiji tells us the following:

My normal tendency is to say, “I am the body, mind complex and I have consciousness that illumines my thought.”

Vedanta wants us to say:

“ I am the Consciousness principle and the body mind complex is an incidental instrument used by me”.

This shift in perspective has to be practiced by all of us.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy

Tatireya Upanishad, Class 15

Greetings All,

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 9, Shloka # 1:

The practice of what is right and proper, as fixed by the scriptural texts, is to be done along with reading the texts oneself and propagating the truths of the same. “Truth”, meaning practicing in life what is to be understood to be

right and proper, is to be pursued along with regular studies and preaching. Penance, study, and preaching; control of the senses, study and preaching; tranquility, study and preaching; the “maintenance of fire”, study and preaching; offering oblations in fire sacrifice, study and preaching of the Vedas; serving the guests, study and preaching; the performance of duties towards man, study and preaching; duties towards children, study and preaching of the Vedas; procreation, study and preaching; propagation of the race, study and preaching; all these are things to be practiced sincerely. Satyavaca, son of Rathitara, holds that truth alone is to be strictly practiced. Taponitya, a son of Purusista declares that penance alone is to be practiced. Naka, son of Modgala, holds the view that the study and preaching of the Vedas alone is to be practiced; that verily, is penance; aye that is penance.

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad, Swami Paramarthananda said, after talking about the five Upasanas, now in anuvakaha # 9 Karma yoga is being discussed. Karma Yoga is an integral part of spiritual sadhanas. One can drop Karma Yoga only at death or at time of Sanyasa. Until then, in all three ashramas, one has to perform Karma. In Brahmacharya and Vanaprastha there are fewer Karmas while Grihasthashrama is dominated by Karmas. A Grihastha can get away without performing any Upasanas but he cannot escape performing Karmas. Karmas, performed as a means of spiritual sadhana, are known as Karma Yoga. One of the important spiritual Karma's is Pancha Maha Yagna. Both Pancha maha yagna and Daivika Sampathi are Karma's that are required to be performed.

In Pancha Maha Yagna, in different contexts, different Yagnas are highlighted. Study and teaching of scriptures is highlighted. The word Pravachanam, in the shloka, has a second meaning. It also means performing Brahma Yagna as a ritual. Brahma Yagna as a ritual used to be performed in the past. It is still performed as a part of Avani Avittam (upakarma) samskara. In this ceremony thanks are given to scriptures and

their authors. Vyasa is honored as Krishna Dvaipanya as are the various authors' wives. This part of the Samskara takes about seven minutes of the overall ritual. As per the requirements of Brahma Yagna one has to study scriptures every day. Five items are mentioned in Brahma Yagna. They are:

1. Svasakha: The branch to which one belongs is to be worshipped.
2. Gita: Entire Gita is to be studied.
3. Vishnu Sahasranamam: Has to be chanted.
4. Rudrum: has to be chanted.
5. Purushasukta: Has to be chanted.

Smaller versions of these mantras are also accepted. Thus, for Svasakha one can chant the Gayathri. All these five mantras are to be regularly chanted. This is considered ritualistic pravachanam.

A part of Brahma Yagna includes sharing the knowledge of scriptures with another person, everyday.

The ninth Anuvakha highlights Brahma yagna as very important.

Ritum: is understanding the purpose of life according to the Vedas. Primary purpose of life is moksha. Dharma, artha, kama etc., are just stepping stones towards moksha.

Satyam: Knowing is not enough. One also has to practice the teachings daily with sincerity. An ounce of practice is worth a pound of theory. Practice of aacharas and anushtanas is satyam.

Tapaha: means practicing austerity or discipline of willful self-denial to master my sense organs i.e., the five gyanendriyas, the five karmendriyas and the pancha pranas. How to know if I am in control of my sense organs? Once in a while say no to something you do every day. If by doing so your mind is disturbed, it means you are being enslaved by your senses. This willful self-denial is very important. Enforced

discipline from outside is suppression. Self-denial is Tapas. All Vratams fall under Tapas. Upavasa and Maunam are two great examples of Tapas. Managing the tongue is very important. If tongue is mastered other Indriyas will also come under control. Many Upasanas are prescribed under Tapas and they include Krichram and Chandrayanam. Chadrayanam upavasa description includes: From Shukla paksha onwards take one handful of rice and increase it daily by one handful. Thus, on full moon day you are taking 15 handful of rice. On Krishna paksha day take 14 handful of rice reducing one handful everyday. On new moon day it is upavasam or no food day.

Damaha: Sensory discipline. We have discussed this topic in Tatva bodha. It is also called Indriya Nigraha. Suppression of senses is not recommended. If so, what directions should senses take? For example, what to see and what not to see? Scriptures say, anything that activates Asuri Sampathi should not be seen or performed. Anything that activates one's Daiviha Sampathi can be seen. Going down is easy and natural. Going up is difficult.

Kshama: Thought discipline. Watch your thought. They become actions. Thus: Thought>action>habit>character>destiny (destination).

God does not determine destiny. It is determined as seen from the flow shown above finally by thought. Your thoughts determine your destiny. Since nobody can see them, we take our thoughts for granted. It is like in a house one tends to keep the drawing room very neat and tidy while basement is left dirty. We do this as nobody comes to the basement. So, we should be more aware of our thoughts. So, thought discipline is important.

Suryanamaskara mantra has thought discipline in it. If one does not have this discipline one tends to blurt out without awareness. Every word should be uttered thoughtfully. Seeing even one termite means a great portion of your house has been

already been infested. Be aware of your thoughts.

Agnyaha: means fires. It symbolizes fire ritual or Deva Yagna. Why are rituals called Agni? Before starting a ritual the householder has to kindle the fire ritualistically. This fire is called Garbhapathya Agni. The Grihasta is required to maintain this fire at all times including for its use in cremation.

Ahavani Agni and Dakshina Agni's are kindled out of Garbhapathya Agni and used for other rituals and later placed back at their place of origin. For a Grihasta, 26 rituals are mentioned such as seven homa yagnas, seven havir yagnas, seven soma yagnas and pancha maha yagnas. Agnihotram is a fundamental Vedic ritual.

Atithya: means entertaining guests, housing them and feeding them. It is also called anna danam yagna. It is all part of manusha Yagna.

Manusham: means to fulfill societal obligations. One gets many benefits by being a part of society such as the gas, phone, bank etc. Relatives and friends come to your assistance during times of trouble. So, one has to contribute back to society. In Sanyasa ashrama all such social obligations end. Manusham is also a Manushya yagna.

Praja, Prajna, and Prajati: All three are part of Pitr Yagna. It is a duty to our forefathers. It is our duty to perpetuate including marrying and having children.

Praja: means beget children. Why is it a duty? Why are scriptures interested in children? Our scriptures consider even natural activities are to be converted to worship. Citing two examples: 1) Breathing is a natural and essential phenomenon. Vedas point out breathing can be pranayama sadhana. Gita, chapter 14, discusses this sadhana in detail. Pranayama is to be performed with a proper attitude, at a particular time, place and duration.

2) Feeding: Baby goes to mother for food. For feeding the sadhana is Prana-agnihotra sadhana. Hunger is Pranagni. Eating is an offering to God. The time, place, amount and attitude towards eating are important.

Begetting children also is a Yagna. Marriage is a ritual. The rituals' purpose is to increase dharma. Garbadhana samskara is an important ritual. Naming a child is also a ritual. Thus, many natural processes are converted to samskaras by the Vedas. Vivaha and Garbadhana rituals are related to marriage.

Prajati: means getting grand children. This, in turn, means your children have to be married. Let children know marriage is for spiritual growth, while material growth may be its byproduct. Even in marriage Dharma predominates. Spouse is chosen with this in mind. So, one has to make sure children have a proper attitude towards marriage.

If a child does not want to get married, it should have a higher purpose in life. Thus, one can be a Grihasta or a Sanyasi.

Bhuta Yagna has not been mentioned but should be performed.

It is the worship of plants and animals. Let all your actions be environmentally friendly. Respect ecological harmony. Even an earthworm is a very important creation of God.

So, follow Pancha maha Yagna.

Last section of anuvakaha # 9 emphasizes study and propagation of Vedas as important part of Brahma Yagna.

Take Away:

1. Karmas, performed as a means of spiritual sadhana, are known as Karma Yoga.
2. Pancha Maha Yagna should be performed by all of us every day.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Taitreya Upanishads, Class14

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 8, Shloka # 1:

The sacred sound Om is Brahman. All this is the syllable OM.

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 8, Shloka # 2:

It is widely known that Om is uttered to indicate consent. The priest officiating at the sacrifice encourages his assistants with the words “O Sravya”. With the chanting of Om they start singing the Sama verses; and with “Om Som” they recite the shastras; Adhvaryu answers with the syllable “Om”.

With Om the chief priest, Brahma expresses his assent. One permits the offering of oblation to the fire with “OM”. May I obtain with Brahman; with this determination, the Brahmana says” Om” before he begins to recite the Veda; and he does obtain the Brahman.

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad, Swami Paramarthananda said this shloka is a glorification of Omkara. It is a mantra used in Gyana Kandam, as analysis of Omkara, in Upasana Kandam where Omkara is used as a symbol for saguna Brahma Upasana and in Karma Kandam where it is used in rituals. Priests of Rg, Yajur, and Sama Vedas also use Omkara extensively. Even a beginning Brahmachari starts his chanting or Veda Adhyayana through Omkara chanting. In Veda Adhyayanam one only learns how to chant, as such it is Shabda Pradhana.

Later the Brahmachari moves on to Veda-mimasa where he learns the meaning of the chant. Typically, he learns his branch of Veda that is Rg, Yajur or Sama. Some may also learn more than one Veda. In our tradition memorizing and chanting alone existed in the past and not reading and chanting.

In this Shloka Brahma means Yoga. Thus the Brahmachari starts his chanting with Om. Uttering Om is mangalam. As a result of this prayer he certainly completes Veda Adhyayanam.

Some clarifications were provided on Omkara.

How should one utter or pronounce the word Om?

In English Om is often written as AUM, however the pronunciation is not Aum. In Sanskrit A +U= O, due to a sandhi. Thus, in English, AUM should change to OM. OM is the correct pronunciation.

How long does one chant Om?

In the beginning of a Vedic chanting O must be three matras long or as O3M. At end of a Vedic chanting O should be four matras long or as O4M.

Omkara Japa is prescribed only for Sanyasis. People in other ashramas such as Brahmacharya and Grihasta are not allowed to chant Omkara alone as a kevala mantra. For a Sanyasi it is a compulsory mantra. Sanyasi chants Omkara instead of Gayathri. A Sanyasi can prolong the Om mantra chant as much as he wants such as 000M.

Dayananda Saraswathi used to say that the mere Omkara chanting creates Tivra Vairagyaha (extreme sense of detachment) and because of it a Grihasta may wish to take up Sanyasa after such a chanting. This, of course, can create problems in society. Therefore Omkara is always mixed with other mantras for Grihasta's. Now, concluding the anuvakaha #8 with shloka # 1, it says, May the seeker practice Omkara.

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 9, Shloka # 1:

The practice of what is right and proper, as fixed by the scriptural texts, is to be done along with reading the texts oneself and propagating the truths of the same. "Truth", meaning practicing in life what is to be understood to be right and proper, is to be pursued along with regular studies and preaching. Penance, study, and preaching; control of the senses, study and preaching; tranquility, study and preaching; the "maintenance of fire", study and preaching; offering oblations in fire sacrifice, study and preaching of the Vedas; serving the guests, study and preaching; the performance of duties towards man, study and preaching; duties towards children, study and preaching of the Vedas; procreation, study and preaching; propagation of the race, study and preaching; all these are things to be practiced sincerely. Satyavaca, son of Rathitara, holds that truth alone is to be strictly practiced. Taponitya, a son of Purusista declares that penance alone is to be practiced. Naka, son of Modgala, holds the view that the study and preaching of the Vedas alone is to be practiced; that verily, is penance; aye that is penance.

With previous shloka the five Upasanas of Samshito Upasana, Vyahriti Upasana, Hiranyagarbha Upasana, Pankta Upasana and Omkara Upasana have all been completed. These Upasanas are meant to purify, concentrate and expand one's mind. These Upasanas will make the mind ready for Gyanam. We should keep in mind that these Upasanas will not give us Moksha. For that one has to go through Gyana yoga of sravanam, mananam and nidhidhyasanam of Vedanta scriptures under a qualified Guru.

There are many types of Upasanas. Chandogyo Upanishad has countless Upasanas. Puranas and Itihasas also have many Upasanas. Bhagawatham also has many Upasanas. It is not compulsory to practice a Vedic Upasana. Nowadays, Vedic Upasanas are not preached or practiced anymore. Rather, Ganesha, Rama, Krishna and other such Upasanas are more common and as good for purification of the mind. In today's context

Vedic Upasanas are only of academic interest.

Now, the Upanishad talks about karma as well. Karmas can be Kayika or Vachika karmas. Thus, in the beginning stages, Brahmacharya stage, one starts with Karma yoga. Later, Karma decreases and Upasana increases during Vanaprastha stage. So, one should not neglect Karma. Karma Yoga has been discussed extensively in the Gita. Karma Yoga involves actions that contribute to the spiritual growth. Thus we have:

Para Upakara Karmani: This involves work that helps more people as such leads to spiritual growth.

Para Udasana Karmani: Here my work helps me. I don't care about others. He does not do any good or harm to others. In this state one is in a stage of spiritual stagnation.

Para Apakara Karmani: These are actions harmful to others. It brings one down spiritually.

Swami Chinmayananda used to say:

Godman: Para Upakara

Man man: Para Udasana

Animal man: Para Apakara

So, one should strive to increase Para Upakara or Satvika Karmani. One should bring Tamasika Karmani to a minimum. The word Suna means "necessary evil". If one performs Suna, one should also perform prayaschita. Vedas have Prayaschita built into it so that any errors are corrected immediately. Sandhya Vandanam has Prayschita mantras built into it.

All prayers and Pancha Maha Yagna, all contribute to spiritual growth. Pancha Maha Yagna is a Prayaschita as well as a Shodhaka karmani.

Refreshing our memories on Pancha Maha Yagna, they are:

1. Deva Yagna: Puja or Sandhya vandana are examples
2. Pitṛ Yagna: Prayers and puja to ancestors. One should not forget one's living parents as well.
3. Rishi or Brahma Yagna: Study of scriptures and teaching others about our scriptures.
4. Manushya Yagna: Social Service
5. Bhuta Yagna: Service to lower beings such as animals and plants. Daily placing of Kolam (rangoli) using rice powder, Tulasi puja are all examples of this.

The Upanishad says, of the five-maha yagna's, while all are important, Brahma Yagna foremost. People are naturally more rituals oriented. However, Taittiriya Upanishad recommends a systematic study of scriptures. Many people consider such a study as of academic interest only. However, recognizing that knowledge is power and that spiritual knowledge is very powerful, study of scriptures should not be just for academic interest. Furthermore, spiritual knowledge helps with our Prarabhda Karmas as well. It is a Kavacha against Prarabhda karmas.

This Upanishad also emphasizes values or Daiviha Sampati. Daiviha Sampati means discovering God in my heart. To obtain this sampati one has to acquire Godly character. Therefore values are important.

Discussing the shloka, following words were explained:

Svadyaya: Study of scriptures. In Brahmacharya ashrama Dharma shastra is studied in addition to learning professional skills such as warfare, business etc. Dharma shastra, in poorva bhaga, was a common subject for all students. Thus, in Brahmacharya ashrama one studies Dharma while in Grihastha and Vanaprastha ashramas one lives the Dharma, hence the saying Dharmam Chara. The idea was to learn Dharma in Brahmacharya, then follow Dharma in practice and then learn about Brahman or go to Gyana Yoga.

Pravachanam: Means sharing knowledge. Only a competent Guru can teach you the Vedas. Self-study can be dangerous. This also gives me the responsibility of teaching future generations as well as a part of the Anadi Guru Shishya Parampara.

In the Vedic society everyone had to share by talking and living the teachings of the Vedas. Vedas also ask a segment of society to make the study and spread of scriptural knowledge their only profession. This segment of society is known as Karma Brahmana. Their livelihood is teaching and sharing information and for this they accept as dakshina whatever is given voluntarily. Thus, they had to lead a simple life. Since they were not rich, they were also not burdened with problems and this allowed them more time to study scriptures. Their only job was to learn and share. This is known as Pravachanam. One segment of society was dedicated for this.

Ritum: It means knowledge about life in line with scriptures. Life beyond Pratyaksha Gyanam was also to be studied. Thus, one was required to learn about Aupursheya Gyanam as well. Generally, materialistic (Artha kama pradhana) societies' goals are entertainment and enjoyment. Here, however, a Dharma Moksha Pradhana life (a spiritual life) is important and it is known as Ritum.

Satyam: It means to live life according to scriptures. One should not be a hypocrite. What I know and what I do must have minimum gap. Leading a Vaidica life or a life of Anushtana's (religious life) is Satyam.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bhagawat Geeta, Class 83:

Chapter 6, Verses 5 – 7

Shloka # 5:

॥ अहो भवतु मे मया ह्यहं ॥
अहो भवतु मे मया ह्यहं ॥ 6.5 ॥

Elevate the self by the self; do not weaken the self. Self is indeed the friend of the self. Self-alone is self's foe.

Continuing his teaching of Gita Swami Paramarthananda said, in the beginning of chapter six, Sri Krishna is dealing with the general disciplines to be observed throughout his transactions so that he will enjoy a mind, which is conducive to meditation. These disciplines are called samanya sadhanani or bahiranga sadhanam.

The first Bahiranga sadhana is maintenance of Samatvam of mind even when we go through many experiences. I have no control over the experience itself, which is a product of the external world. I don't even know how my family will react at any point in time. Even after fifty years of marriage a wife is not sure of her husbands reaction to situations. I can only control my response to experiences of life. This control is a Karma Yoga mind. So, having a poised mind is a first discipline. Such a mind is free of violent emotions and it does not get out of control. This capacity to recover from emotional trauma is called Samatvam. If we have that, we are reasonably healthy, psychologically. Psychological health is Samatvam. It is brought about by karma yoga in which the Lord himself plays the primary help or role. So Lord is the backup. We talked of this samatvam up to the 4th shloka of this chapter.

In shloka # 5 Sri Krishna introduces another Bahiranga Sadhana called self-effort. Scriptures say human beings have free will. Plants don't have free will. Animals also don't have choice; as such they also don't have punya and papam. Many people however are fatalistic and don't accept concept of free will. They consider everything as pre-determined. It is difficult to argue with them. To them we say everything is destiny or Prarabhdham. Now, there are two types of prarabhdams, one is punya and other is papam.

If a person has got punya prarabdham meaning if he has a good destiny, that good destiny will influence the mind in such a way that he will accept the concept of freewill. And when the destiny is negative meaning papa prarabdham, the very destiny will influence the mind in such a way that he will not accept freewill. Therefore, we say, those who have got punya destiny will accept freewill. Those who have papa destiny, they will not accept freewill and Sri Krishna is addressing those people who have got punya and accept the concept of freewill. Shastra's want us to accept freewill as well.

Once you accept free will do you also accept destiny or do you think it is free will alone that functions at all times? Shastra's say both free will and destiny play a role in our lives. Fate is the result of our own past actions while freewill is the course of action that we choose to take because of our thinking or because of our buddhi. Between these two, which is more powerful, is it Vidhiya (fate) or Madiya (free will)? We cannot answer this question as we do not know when fate comes in and when free will actuates, as their relative strengths vary. Fate is determined by a particular action of ours and the intensity of this action will vary.

Thus, prarabhdha can occur as prabala (strong), madhyama (middling) or as durbala (weak). So also it is with free will, the intensity of free will varies, as does the result.

Prabal Prarabhda: Free will is helpless. It can only ask for inner strength to face such a powerful fate.

Madhyama prarabhda: Free will can manage the prarabhda. It can reduce the impact of fate.

Durbala Prarabhda: Prayaschitam (as free will) can wipe out the Prarabhda karma.

So, fate can be changed depending upon its intensity. Citing an example, it is like going to a doctor. The doctor will never say, "I can or I cannot." He will desire to examine you first then pronounce his diagnosis. In some cases he will say it is curable, in some cases he will say it can be controlled and in other cases he may say medicine may not be able to help you. Thus, our future is neither controlled by fate or free will. Rather it is controlled by a resultant of the intensities of fate and free will respectively.

Therefore, freewill has got a contributory role in determining our future; and since the freewill has got a contributory role, an asthika purushah, one who follows vedic teaching, he always has an attitude that I can take charge of my life. This is the reason why our goals are called purushartah. Purushartah means goals, which are sought after by human beings; and the goals, which are accomplished by human beings.

Moksha is such a purushartah and it is to be chosen and accomplished by me.

Sri Krishna says, "And Arjuna, I expect you to be the chooser of your future; and once you believe in free will and you have decided to choose your future, I am ready to help you".

God can help only those who are willing to put forth the necessary effort. A guru can help only those students who believe in themselves. Therefore, first, you should have faith and confidence in yourself.

Swami Vivekananda said that " I believe in a man who believes

in himself". Such a man is an Astika.

So take charge. For whatever goal you have to accomplish, you have the same set of instruments i.e., body, mind and intellect complex. In shloka # 5, this instrument is called Atma. Success depends upon your instrument. If they are in decent shape, you can accomplish your goals. It is like a car, if it is in good shape, it will take you far. Katho Upanishad compares our body to a chariot. Just as musicians fine-tune their instruments before a concert so too should we fine-tune this body mind instrument. This is the instrument given to us for this life.

Many people spend a lifetime without knowing what they want in life. Our body and mind must function in coordination. Many organizations fail despite having great people. This happens often due to poor coordination. So, to succeed in life, our body and mind must be in coordination. This is called integration or Gyana Yogyatha prapthihi.

Question comes how do I fine tune my body mind complex? Sri Krishna says one has to use your own body mind complex to perform this fine-tuning.

So, integrate your instruments with your own instruments. Do not weaken your instruments. The most weakening attitude is "I cannot accomplish this". Get over such self-diffidence. Get over the inferiority complex. Be optimistic. This is called self-confidence and self-effort.

Your own Atma is your true friend. Scriptures and God can only contribute indirectly to your assistance. You alone can contribute directly. You alone are also your own enemy.

When you are a friend, the whole world is a friend.

When you are an enemy, the whole world is inimical.

Shloka # 6:

00000000000000000000 00000000000000 00000
 0000000000 00000000 00000000000 0000000000**6.6**

The Self is the friend of that self by which the self has been subdued. The Self alone operates as the foe of one unsubdued by the self.

In previous shloka we noted that this mind body complex is our best friend. If so, how can I be my own friend as well as enemy? How can opposite attributes remain in one person in life? Sri Krishna says any instrument can be a friend or an enemy. An instrument is a friend if I know how to operate it. Atomic energy and electricity are good examples of this. On the other hand, if I don't know how to use the instrument, it can be deadly. Thus, wrong use of atomic energy or electricity can kill. Thus, a managed body mind complex is a friend while an unmanaged one is an enemy. It is like a militant within one's own country. So real victory is self-victory. Therefore, Self- Management is most important.

A body-mind-complex that is under my control is my friend. The body-mind-complex that is beyond my control becomes my own enemy. I do not know what to do? Whatever the body wants I give; whatever sense organs want I give; whatever the emotions want

I give. I consider it my friend; but I do not realize that my own organs are enslaving me and a time comes when I cannot even proceed further nor withdraw. It is like an addiction. If I continue the addiction, the addiction destroys me. If I withdraw from the addiction the withdrawal systems create problems for me.

Who has created this condition? I alone have created this condition.

Shloka # 7:

[illegible]

The supreme Self is concentrated for one who has subdued the self and is quiescent, in cold and heat, in pleasure and pain, and in honor and disgrace.

Let us assume there is such an integrated person, a jitaatma (one who has learned sense discipline). The more I win myself over, the calmer I become. Jitatma is a Prashanta purusha. He is gyana yogyaha. He is not liberated yet. He is, however, ready for Gyana yoga or Vedantic enquiry.

How do I know that I am master of myself? What is the sign? Sri Krishna says prashantah; the more I win a victory over myself the more my life is calm. This calmness (prashantaha) of mind is the acid test. Otherwise, my mind will be turbulent and I am not able to control this turbulence. Therefore, a jitatma is a prashantah purushah and Sri Krishna calls such a person yogarudhah. He is a sadhana chatushtaya sampannah person or a Gyana yogyaha person. He is not yet liberated though. He will have to take Gyana Yoga to obtain moksha.

Only a person who reaches this stage will find Vedanta appealing. The different types of intellects (budhi) are described below.

Karpura Budhi: It catches fire immediately.

Kari (coal) Budhi: It will catch fire slowly.

Plantain Budhi: It won't catch fire rather it will put out the fire.

Vedanta also classifies students as: Manda, Madhyama and Uttama. An Uttama budhi student gets knowledge very easily. He will get Mukti as well.

And, therefore Arjuna, first develop self-belief in free will and develop the confidence that the future is in my hands. Then, with self-confidence, put forth self-effort. The first

stage of self-effort is attunement of my own instruments (body mind complex). If you do this, rest will be taken care of.

Take away: Scriptures believe in free will and so should you.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy

Omkaara Upasana

In the 13th Class of Taitreya Upanishad, Swamiji discusses Omkaara Upasana. This upasana is presented in the form of a chart. Please click on the link for a chart form of this Upasana.

omkaara upasana

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 13

Greetings All,

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 8, Shloka # 1:

The sacred sound Om is Brahman. All this is the syllable OM.

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 8, Shloka # 2:

It is widely known that Om is uttered to indicate consent. The priest officiating at the sacrifice encourages his assistants with the words "O Sravya". With the chanting of Om they start singing the Sama verses; and with "Om Som" they recite the shastras; Adhvaryu answers with the syllable "Om".

With Om the chief priest, Brahma expresses his assent. One permits the offering of oblation to the fire with "OM". May I obtain with Brahman; with this determination, the Brahmana says "Om" before he begins to recite the Veda; and he does obtain the Brahman.

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad, Swami Paramarthananda said we have completed the first four upasanas of chapter # 1. They are Samshito Upasana, Vyahriti Upasana, Hiranyagrabha upasana and Pankta Upasana. Now in anuvaka # 8, the fifth and final upasana of this chapter known as Omkara upasana is introduced.

In this upasana the word OM is introduced as a symbol or Alambanam and upon it Ishwara is invoked. Omkara can represent Virat (Samashti Prapancha), Hiranyagarbha (Sukshma prapancha) and Ishwara (Karana Prapancha). Omkara can thus represent the macro or Samashti. " May you practice upasana of Brahman on Omkara" It is a Saguna Brahman. Nirguna Brahman cannot be an object of Upasana. If it is an object it cannot be nirguna. Thus, if an object is meditated upon such an object cannot be nirguna. In such an instance the meditator alone is the Nirguna Brahman.

Therefore, Brahma upasana connotes Saguna Brahman. It can represent the Virat (Samashti Guna), Hiranyagarbha (Sukshma guna) and Ishwara (Karana Guna).

When there are so many sacred words in Scriptures why choose Omkara? Omkara is a most sacred and unique mantra. We have seen before in Shikshavalli's anuvaka # 5 that Brahmaji extracted Omkara from Vedas. Therefore, Omkara chanting is

equal to chanting all Vedic mantras. Thus, we get the Omkara mahima. Any word in scripture can refer to a particular object. Thus, when we say chair it means only “chair” and not a table. So it is also with the name Rama or Krishna. Thus, words have limitations. They don’t represent the totality of Brahman. To describe God, a word describing all objects in cosmos should be used. One word should represent all objects of creation. OM is such a word. Om encompasses all objects of creation Thus:

A: All Sthula objects

U: All Sukshma objects.

M: All Karana objects.

A is the beginning of sound. Last sound produced is M. U represents all intermediate alphabets. Thus, AUM represents all characters. They also represent all words of the language. Thus: OM represents alphabets. Alphabets represent words or padam. Padam represents objects. Therefore, OM represents all objects of the world. All objects put together represent the Lord. Hence Om is his best description. Lord is one and OM is also one. Therefore, Om is Pranavaha or the ideal name for God. Hence it is used in the upasana.

Omkara is very important in upasana. It is also very important in meditation. Omkara is also very important in Karma Kanda. Everywhere Om is important.

How is it important in rituals?

Omkara is a versatile mantra. Thus, Omkara is used as:

Anukriti or acceptance. Omkara conveys acceptance. Hasma-vai-api means well known. In olden times different priests were involved in rituals. There are special invitation mantras for specific devatas. The concerned priest had to be ready with oblations. Then the main priest asks his assistants to invoke

the God.

O Sravya, he says to his assistants. Then, the assistant starts the Vedas with Omkara.

OM iti samani gayanti. Each priest of the ritual handles one mantra. Thus Rg, Yajus and Sama are chanted.

The Rg Veda priest is called Hota. His assistants are called Hotraganaha. Usually there is a main priest with three assistants or a total of four.

The Yajur Veda head priest is called Adhvaryuhu. His assistants are called Adhvarganaha. Here also there is a head priest with three assistants.

The Sama Veda priest is called Udgata and his assistants are called Udgataganaha. They also total four.

The Atharavana Veda has no direct application in Vedic rituals. The priest does not play a direct role. Therefore, he becomes the supervisor of the entire ritual. He is called Brahma. He too has three assistants known as Brahmaganaha.

Thus, a total of 16 priests are involved including the husband and wife (Yajamana and Yajamani). They all add up to 18 people for a yagna.

The Brahma (atharvanavedi) supervises to ensure all priests are performing their rituals properly. If mistakes happen there are built in prayaschittas in every ritual. The prayaschita can vary depending upon the mistake made in the ritual. Thus, prayaschita can include from donating one's property to chanting gayathri japa. Thus, a Brahma must be very knowledgeable and must be very alert. He has to be a Chaturvedi, one who knows all four Vedas. All four ganas use Omkara in rituals. Thus, OM iti Samani gayanti.

Rg veda mantras are called Shastrani and they can be chanted with or without swaras. They also start the mantras with Om.

Swamji said nowadays there are not many Chaturvedi's available for such Yagnas. Therefore, a seat is assigned for one in a yaga, although it is empty. It is assumed a Brahma is sitting there.

Adhvaryuhu, the Yajur Veda priest, gives permission using OM. Agni Hotra is a basic Srauta karma performed twice every day. It is a fire ritual. Aupasana is also a fire ritual performed every day after one's marriage.

In these daily pujas OM is the beginning of all mantras. For spiritual cleansing of house too water is sanctified in front of God and then used with chanting of OM and sprinkling in many parts of a house.

A Brahmachari starting to learn Vedic chanting also begins his chant with Om. Through the chanting he grasps the Vedas.

A Sanyasi does not have gayathri mantra. They only have Omkara mantra to chant.

Since a Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra, all chant Omkara mantra, it is a very important mantra for all castes as well.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bhagawat Geeta, Class 82, Chapter 6, Verses 2 to 5

Shloka # 2:

[illegible]

That which they call renunciation, know to be yoga, O Pandava Prince! None indeed who has not discarded mental constructions can become a yogin.

Continuing his teaching of Gita Swami Paramarthananda said, I had pointed out in the last class that in the 6th chapter of the Gita, Sri Krishna deals with five important topics with regard to the dhyanam or meditation and those five topics are:

1. Bahiranga sadhanani or general disciplines to be observed throughout one's transactions, so that one can practice meditation successfully.
2. Antaranga sadhanani or specific disciplines to be observed just before the starting of the meditation;
3. Dhyana svarupam, the actual process of meditation;
4. Dhyana phalam, the benefit of meditation;
5. Dhyana pratibhanda pariharau; obstacles to meditation, and their remedy.

Bahiranga sadhanani: are preparations before taking up dhyanam. If we don't have discipline during a transaction mind can be disturbed. Such disturbances, also known as Samskara's, can scar the mind. This Samskara will bubble up later when the mind is quiet. They are a like piece of wood held down under water that pops up the moment you release it. Our subconscious mind has many such Samskaras that can come up at any time the conscious mind is resting. During meditation the conscious mind withdraws then the subconscious impressions come up. Violent disturbances during the day can come up as

well.

How to stop such disturbances from occurring in the mind?

Training the mind for Samatvam can stop this. Citing an example, a philosopher and businessman was told, "you have lost everything." He said in agitation, "What"? Calming down, later, he said, "So what?" This change from "what" to "so what" requires great training of the mind to maintain Samatvam. In Samatvam, the mind does not get too high or too low. Practice of Karma Yoga helps with Samatvam. Sri Krishna thus glorifies a Karma Yogi or a Grihasta. Chapter six begins with glorification of householder, and through this glorification God is glorifying Karma Yoga as well and thus Samatvam too.

We can say: Grihasthashrama=Karma Yoga=Samatvam.

How does Sri Krishna glorify? He says the householder is the real Sanyasi. He says regular Sanyasis are not the real Sanyasi's. Then, again, Sri Krishna points out that a conventional meditator is not a real meditator. Who is a conventional meditator? It is one who has withdrawn from all the activities; taken to a quiet place, taken the proper posture; closing his eyes and keeping the body straight; such a person is a conventional meditator. Krishna says that conventional meditator is not true a meditator. Then who is a true meditator? Sri Krishna says, it is the karma yogi, the grihasta, who is a true meditator.

Shankaracharya, a champion of Sanyasis is disturbed by this criticism of Sri Krishna. He says, Sri Krishna does not want to criticize a Sanyasi rather he wants to glorify the Grihasta. He is using "Nahi Ninda Nyayaha", a process where you criticize something to glorify something else. So, the focus is on glorification. Sri Krishna is glorifying Karma Yoga.

In the second shloka he justifies why he calls a Grihasta a

real Sanyasi. The Grihasta has after all not renounced anything. He has all kinds of possessions (house, money, land..), family etc. How can such a person be a Sanyasi? What makes him a Sanyasi?

Sri Krishna clarifies that Sanyasa means renunciation. The word renunciation does not always mean renouncing wife and children; or one's home and job. Sri Krishna says a Karma Yogi Grihasta is a renouncer because he has renounced concerns for the future. **Biggest concern of people is what happens in the future. One who drops such worry is a Sankalpa Sanyasi.**

Worrying versus planning. Planning is acceptable. It is a deliberate action at a stipulated time. Worry is not deliberate. It is a reaction or obsession that happens at any time. It makes us inefficient. Karma Yogi may plan but he does not worry, hence he is a Sankalpa Sanyasi.

Shloka # 2: In the second shloka Sri Krishna says, "O Arjuna, by the word sanyasa or renunciation, I do not mean the conventional renunciation". Swamiji says Gita is a Grihasta book. Sri Krishna was a Grihasta as was Arjuna. Vyasa too was a Grihasta. So, he says, if you are a good Karma Yogi you will get benefit of both Grihasta and Sanyasa. So, if one has to become a Karma Yogi one has to renounce Sankalpa or our obsession with future. So, renounce worry.

Shloka # 3:

कर्मयोगोऽसंशयः प्रथमोऽयं योगोऽयं कर्मयोगः
कर्मयोगोऽसंशयः प्रथमोऽयं योगोऽयं कर्मयोगः 6.3

Work is said to be the cause in the case of the silent sage who seeks to scale the peak of Yoga; as regards this very sage who has scaled it, quiescence is said to be the cause.

How long should one follow karma Yoga? Is it an end or is it an intermediate step? Karma Yoga is not an ultimate sadhana.

It only makes you Gyana Yogyata Prapthihi. It purifies the mind. Limitation of Karma Yoga is it cannot give liberation.

Some people claim Karma Yoga alone will give liberation. The other extreme is Karma Yoga is useless and should not be taken up. Citing an example one person says I will never enter the college; his argument is after all finally I have to come out, so why even enter?

Sri Krishna says, use Karma yoga then transcend and get liberation.

So, initially follow Karma yoga. In the shloka Yogam means Dhyana Yogam. No scripture prescribes meditation in the beginning. Sri Krishna recommends meditation only after five chapters. Patanjali recommends meditation only after sixth stage of Yoga. There are eight stages of his Yoga.

Without studying scriptures the only meditation recommended is Nama japam.

Yama and Niyama of Patanjali, the Do's and Don't of Yoga, are the same as Karma Yoga. If one has to purify the mind he should perform Karma Yoga. Therefore, Vedas begin with Karma kandam. How long do you perform Karma Yoga? Once you have the necessary mental preparation then you grow out of it. It is like the life of a fetus in a womb, after nine months, nature will throw the baby out. So withdrawing from Karma Yoga can be done in two ways:

1. Taking to Sanyasashrama or Sanyasavidhi, a formal process. Just as the sacred thread ceremony is used for initiation, this process is used for withdrawal from life. Sanyasavidhi's goal is to get out of rituals and start the process of self-enquiry.
2. There is another form of withdrawal in which a person reduces the amount of activity remaining in grihastha ashrama itself. So, if he was doing rituals for many

hours he now reduces the duration. Even mundane activities, he reduces, handing them over to someone else. This requires detachment. Thus, this is also a kind of a vanaprastha ash

Therefore, either by becoming a sanyasi or by taking to vanaprastha one withdraws. Both of them involve reduction of extrovert activities. Now, I spend my time in sravanam, mananam and nidhidhyasanam.

Shloka # 4:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ।
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥6.4॥,

When the sage is no longer attached to sense objects and works; he discards all mental constructions; then he is said to have scaled the peak of Yoga.

In previous shloka we learn that one should follow karma yoga also known as Pravrithi marga and then follow up with Gyana Yoga or Nivrithi marga. How do I know when to switch to Gyana Yoga? Swamiji said, for going to a college we have pass examinations that tell us our next step. Similarly nature also tells us the next step when it expels a baby from the womb after nine months. Unfortunately, the rate of inner spiritual maturity is not uniform for all. The rate of acquiring inner maturity is also not uniform for all. Some people become mature within short while other people even after 95 years of life experiences don't mature. Citing an example, a child asked its grandfather, are you ready to marry? He answered, who will give me a girl?

Sri Krishna says **a mature mind is free from obsession of sense pleasures**. Here the emphasis is on obsession. Artha and Kama are allowed but obsession with them is wrong. Until mind is preoccupied with money and entertainment, you are not ready for Vedanta. The key is obsession. **If you don't get what you want, you should not be upset**. Preference is acceptable but

not need. Craving after sense pleasures should not overwhelm me. Hating sense objects is also not good. This too can be an obsession.

Dayananda Swamiji said, when you are a child and play with marbles, one tends to be possessive of the marbles. Now, when you are much older, you don't have a problem of playing without attachment. Thus, playing and not playing both should be acceptable. This is known as Vairagyam. Artha kama (wealth and entertainment) are Sadhyam. Karma is Sadhanam. He is not attached to both. He is attracted to moksha purushartha's. Therefore sign of maturity is "detachment". Such a person is called Sarva Sankalpa Sanyasi. He is not obsessed with the coming and going of material things.

Security never depends on external conditions. It is an internal state of mind. Even possession of wealth can cause insecurity. So, better surrender to Lord. Such a person becomes a Sankalpa Sanyasi. When a person enters Sanyasashrama his only security is God. This is also true for a Karma Yogi.

Shloka # 5:

॥ अहंकारं त्यज्यते ॥ अहंकारं त्यज्यते ॥
॥ अहंकारं त्यज्यते ॥ अहंकारं त्यज्यते ॥ 6.5 ॥

Elevate the self by the self; do not weaken the self. Self is indeed the friend of the self. Self alone is self's foe.

With previous shloka Sri Krishna has completed Bahiranga sadhanani. Enjoy equanimity and maintain balance of mind. Avoid worry about the future. This is Samatvam. In this shloka Sri Krishna introduces two more Bahiranga sadhanas. They are:

Self-Effort: or using one's free will, appropriately. **He says we have our own free will.** Many think everything is predetermined or believe in fatalism. Scriptures, however, do

not support this fatalism. While scriptures do talk about fate as that which affects the future the following should be considered. Fate is poorva karma phalam. Fatalism means that fate is the only factor that determines future. **Fate, in reality, is only one of the factors. The other factor is our own free will or self-effort.** Our free will can eliminate or reduce the intensity of fate. Thus:

Powerful fate: Cannot be stopped by free will

Medium fate: Can be controlled by free will.

Feeble fate: Can be stopped by free will.

Take Away:

1. Sri Krishna says we have our own free will. Fate, in reality, is only one of the factors. The other factor is our own free will or self-effort.
2. A mature mind is free from obsession of sense pleasures. Here the emphasis is on obsession. If you don't get what you want, you should not be
3. One who drops worry of the future is a Sankalpa Sanyasi. Worry is not deliberate. It is a reaction or obsession that happens at any time.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy

Baghawat Geeta, Class 81, Chapter 6, Verses 1 & 2

Greetings All,

Continuing his teaching of Gita and the introduction to chapter 6, Swami Paramarthananda said, in last class we talked about the role of meditation for a Vedantic seeker. It is purely from point of seeking liberation. There are meditations meant for extraordinary powers as well. A Vedantic seeker is not interested in such powers. Extraordinary powers place one in bondage or in samsara. Such powers can lead to fights and jealousy. So, here we are only interested in Self-Knowledge and liberation. This does not require extraordinary powers. Thus, there are Gyani's without such extraordinary powers, while there are Agyani's with such powers. Rakshasas are a good example of Agyani's with extraordinary powers. Our interest is only in purity of mind and assimilation of knowledge.

Thus, meditation has two roles. The roles are:

- Meditation before study of scriptures is called Upasana
- Meditation after study of scriptures is called Nidhidhyasanam.

The study process itself is called shravana mananam or gyana yoga. Study of scriptures itself is called sravanam. And therefore the entire spiritual journey can be presented in three stages: Upasana, Gyana yoga and Nidhidhyasanam.

Upasana: This upasana is saguna ishvara upasana. It is performed for Gyana yogyata prapthihi or for purification of mind.

Gyana Yoga: is consistent and systematic study of the scriptures for a length of time, under the guidance of a competent acharya and this study alone gives self-knowledge.

If one does not get knowledge through scriptures there is no other way to obtain this knowledge. Scriptural study is the only means of knowledge.

Nidhidhyasanam meditation is meant for assimilation of knowledge. I would like to add a few more ideas with regard to the assimilation, because doubts do come up in this area.

After gaining knowledge one contemplates on the knowledge received that "That I am not the Body. I am not the mind. I am not the senses. However, I am the awareness which is aware of all of them ". This contemplation is not meant for converting knowledge into Brahman. Rather this meditation after scriptural study is for experiencing the Gyana phalam.

Scriptures point out that we experience Brahman all the time as consciousness. No special effort is required to experience the light in the hall. So also it is with consciousness. Everything else is evident to us because of consciousness. Every word I hear now is due to consciousness. Consciousness is self evident and ever evident. It is Brahman. So, Brahman anubhavam is not an issue. Therefore meditation after scriptural studies is only for Gyana Phalam. The benefit that knowledge brings is shanti, tripthi and abhayam. This experience of peace, fullness, contentment, fearlessness and security is called assimilation or jivan mukti.

Sri Krishna will tell us how to meditate in this chapter. However an overview is as follows:

- Upasana Meditation is to purify the mind.
- Study of scriptures is to attain knowledge
- Meditate to experience benefit of knowledge, which is peace and fullness.

The first meditation is called upasanam. The second meditation is called nidhidhyasanam. The sixth chapter of the Gita is focusing on nidhidhyasanam, which I translate as Vedantic meditation. The sixth chapter is nidhidhyasana yoga or

Vedantic meditation. This chapter can be divided into five main topics. They are:

1. General preparation for meditation or called Bahiranga sadhana. These are disciplines that have to be observed throughout the transaction. These are meant for day-to-day transactions or Samanya sadhanani.
2. Specific disciplines: Vishesha Sadhanani are disciplines to be observed just before meditation. They are also known as antaranga or vishesha sadhanani.
3. Dhyana swaroopam: What is meditation? The process of meditation? Is it concentrating on something or is it remaining thoughtless? Is it destruction of the mind or is it transcending the mind? All these points are clarified here.
4. Benefit of Vedantic meditation: Is it reading other peoples mind or predicting the future? All these points are clarified.
5. Obstacles to meditation: What are the obstacles and how to remedy them are discussed. Dhyana pratibhanda parihara, here pratibhanda means obstacles and parihara means remedy, are discussed. One such obstacle is sleeping during meditation. Sri Krishna describes such obstacles and how to overcome them.

A sixth topic is also discussed which Swamiji preferred to bring up later.

General preparation for meditation:

Why have this preparation? We have only one mind for our day-to-day transactions and meditation. In our daily transactions we go through all kinds of experiences. Before meditation one must free one self from all these experiences and meditate with a fresh mind. The daily transactions leave strong impressions on us that affect meditation. Violent emotional disturbances adversely impact meditation. Both the winner and loser of Wimbledon cannot get sleep. One should learn the art

of keeping a balanced mind. This does not mean an emotionless mind. An emotionless mind is like a wall. Rather it is a mind without violent upheavals. So, one has to keep a balanced mind or Samatvam and not get carried away by joys and sorrows. I should have mental mastery. It is one of the pre-conditions of meditation.

So, how to get Samatvam? Sri Krishna has talked about this extensively in chapters 2 and 3 respectively. A Karma yoga way of life leads to samatvam. It is the art of living for a balanced mind. What is karma yoga? It is a means for Dhyana yoga.

Swamiji said that while Sri Krishna has not classified the chapter into five topics, he has done so done to better present the information in the chapter.

Shloka # 1:

अनादित्वात् कर्मणा कर्मणा कर्मणा कर्मणा कर्मणा कर्मणा
अनादित्वात् कर्मणा कर्मणा कर्मणा कर्मणा कर्मणा कर्मणा 6.1

Not depending on the fruits of it, whoever performs the work that has to be done is the renouncer and Yogin; not he who has rejected the household fires and is a non-worker.

Sri Krishna starts at the general preparation or Samanya sadhana. It is Karma yoga for keeping the mind poised or as a means for Dhyana yoga.

Karma Yogi is one who considers spiritual growth as a priority in life. Material growth is subservient to spiritual growth. He prefers the spiritual to material. For him dharma and moksha are a priority rather than artha and kama.

Citing an example, Swamiji says, it is like eating curd rice with pickle. Usually a little pickle is used with rice to eat. The problem comes when one eats a lot of pickle with a touch of rice. Thus, in life we require money as well as

entertainment. But they should not be our primary activity. Spiritual growth should be our priority.

The karma yogi does not focus on material benefits. He performs actions specified by scriptures for inner growth.

Scriptures prescribe two types of activities.

- Enjoy life, eat well etc., that are artha kama pradhana.
- Perform spiritual activities like pancha maha yagna that contribute to inner growth and Chitta shuddhi. Through these activities more people are benefitted by selfless activities. These are nishkama karmas or selfless activities. The selfless actions are performed only for spiritual growth. Spiritual growth is often subtle and not visible while material growth is often visible. Spiritual growth will change how you look at yourself.

Sri Krishna says such a karma yogi is as good as a sanyasi. Why? He is considered a sanyasi because he has renounced concerns for material growth. What can come out of such renunciation? Such renunciation may result in failure in the material world, nevertheless, inner growth will occur. Sri Krishna says for a karma yogi there is never a failure because he is growing inwardly, whatever be the external outcome of his actions. As such he has no anxiety. He accepts whatever is going to come as Ishvara prasadam or God's will. Each experience is considered a lesson, good or bad. Sri Krishna says such a person can also be considered a meditator.

After all meditation is mind dwelling on a field. A karma Yogi is not agitated about past or worried about future. He is fully available to the present.

He is not worried about result. He has a focused mind. He is practicing open-eyed meditation. He offers all his actions to god (see ch.3, shloka # 30 and ch.5 shloka #10). Every action is an offering to god. This is nothing but meditation. He is a karma yogi.

A sanyasi in ochre robe, while in meditation, is thinking about his foreign trip, number of disciples etc., he is only an external sanyasi. He is not a karma yogi. However, a householder who is active is a karma yogi, if his activity is focused.

Shloka # 2:

॥ तस्मात्संन्यासो योगो न संन्यासोऽपि योगः ॥
॥ तस्मात्संन्यासो योगो न संन्यासोऽपि योगः ॥ 6.2 ॥

That which they call renunciation, know to be yoga, O Pandava Prince! None indeed who has not discarded mental constructions can become a yogin.

In previous shloka we learnt that a Karma yogi is the real sanyasi and not the person in ochre robe. Here Sri Krishna justifies it.

What is renunciation? Sri Krishna wants to say that external renunciation can never be considered a real renunciation; because self-knowledge is not connected with the external body rather self-knowledge is connected with the mind or intellect. So by making a few external changes if the mind continues to be the same what is the use? External renunciation is not real renunciation. Many take sanyasa and regret the decision, as it is a one-way traffic, one cannot go back to grihashthashrama again. For real renunciation, one needs to be free from concerns about future. What will happen to me? What will my wife do? If wife dies, what will I do? Most of our time is spent in planning for the future. Until one gives up thought of the future, you cannot have meditation. This is true for Sanyasi as well as Grihasta. Renunciation of the worry regarding future is true renunciation. Such a person is a karma yogi and a sankalpa sanyasi (one who has given up worry about future).

Now worrying about future is different from planning for future. Planning is a deliberate action. Worrying, however, is

impulsive and can happen at any time. While planning is acceptable worrying is an obstacle. Worrying makes one inefficient. **One who does not worry is a Sanyasi.**

Take Away:

1. Meditation is mind dwelling on a field. Thus, anybody, performing any activity, totally immersed in it, is in meditation and as such a karma yogi.
2. A Karma Yogi is not agitated about past or worried about future. He is fully available to the present. One who does not worry is a Sanyasi.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy

Upasanas in Shikshavalli

Shishavalli of Taitreya Upanishad enumerates the following vedic upasanas:

- Samhitha Upasana
- Vyahirithi Upasana
- Hiranya Garbha Upasana
- Panktha Brahma Upasana

Please click on the link below for a chart reproduced from Swami Paramarthananda's book with minor additions based on Swamiji's classes.

Upasanas in Sikshavallie