

Upadesa Saram, Class 4

Greetings All,

Refreshing our memory of the last class Swami Paramarthananda discussed shlokas 3 and 4 respectively. In the first two verses of this book Ramana MahaRishi was refuting the claims of the Poorvamimsaka philosopher. Karma, secular or sacred, cannot give one Moksha. Karma is in fact a big roadblock to liberation. Karma has by its nature a snowballing effect. Thus, karma leads to more and more Karma. In this process a person becomes an extrovert. This quality in turn blocks one's path of Self Enquiry.

Shloka # 3: In this shloka, Swamiji says, even though Karma is an obstacle to Moksha still it can be converted to a medicine or Tonic for spiritual growth. This can be compared to the way snake venom can be converted into a snakebite antidote. Thus, Karma can promote inner growth. Karma converted to a Sadhana becomes Karma Yoga. Karma Yoga helps with spiritual growth.

How to perform this conversion? By dedicating all Karmas at the feet of the Lord. Thus, all our daily karmas from waking, brushing teeth, eating, working and sleeping all these activities can be performed as a puja. A prayer is performed to the Neem tree even as one obtains its twig for cleaning the teeth. Known as Danta Dhavanam (cleaning the teeth), here one prays to the Neem tree requesting it's blessing in removing all impurities from ones mind even as we brush our teeth. Several mantras are chanted before eating making it an offering to God. All these are known as Ishwara Arapana Bhavana. It is an offering to God with the prayer " Let this Karma turn out well".

Discussing Karma Phalam, Swamiji says, it is consequence of our Karmas that result in the stresses and strains of life. One does not know what the outcome of our Karmas will be.

Nobody can guarantee a result. In Karma Yoga, one receives the consequences of one's actions, good or bad, as Ishwara Prasadam.

Karma is of two types. Sakama Karma and Nishkama Karma.

1. Sakama karma's are actions that are for one's material prosperity such as house, family, children etc. Its primary focus is material growth. It may provide some spiritual benefits as well, if performed as Karma Yoga.
2. Nishkama karma's are actions performed exclusively for inner growth. It may provide the benefit of some material growth as well.

Karma Yoga says both Sakama and Nishkama Karmas should be performed as an offering to God. Both will contribute to our inner growth, only in different proportions. It should be noted that while the results of Sakama Karma are usually visible through one's acquisitions such as a car, a house etc. Nishkama Karma's results of inner growth are often invisible.

Aim of Karma Yoga should be to increase the percentage of Nishkama Karma. Shastra's prescribe some Nishkama Karmas known as Pancha Maha Yagya's for one's inner growth.

A seeker has to set priorities in life. Should one go after material growth or inner growth? A choice of material growth means the focus of one's life is on external acceptance, social status, money etc. However, a life focused on inner growth will purify one's mind and reduce the Raga and Dvesha. Raga is attachment to external world. Dvesha is dislike of attachments to external world. Raga and Dvesha alone cause all the stresses in life. Thus:

Raga is due to powerful expectations. Raga can also be called extreme attachment.

Dvesha is due to the mindset that " I expect this not to happen." Dvesha can also be called extreme aversion. Both can

cause stress in our life.

A karma Yogi makes Raga and Dvesha just preferences. It is an attitude of: If available, it is fine, if not, that is fine too. Swamji says an intolerant mind is an irritable mind. The word Anayas means relaxed mind. Vedanta requires a relaxed mind. Once Raga and Dvesha are reduced they will promote Moksha. One has to keep in mind Karma Yoga cannot give Moksha. Karma will, however, prepare the mind for Moksha.

As already said, material growth is tangible while inner growth is intangible. That is the reason one does not recognize inner growth. Peace and happiness depends on inner growth. Peace and happiness has no relation to external growth. Comfort is not the same as peace and happiness. A rich man sitting in the comfort of his bungalow may be in great turmoil, while the poor man after a day's hard work may be blissfully asleep in a field. Swamiji says, " I can be comfortably unhappy". Between the two the choice is very clear. Always choose the path of inner growth.

Shloka # 4: So, what are these karmas that provide inner growth? Ramana maharishi says they are:

1. **Puja:** Ishwara aradhana. Worship of God, daily. One chooses a deity, Ishta Devata, to worship. God in any form as a symbol is worshipped.
2. **Japa:** Nama Japa. Recite and repeat a particular name of God. Sri Krishna says in the Gita that Japa Yagya is an excellent form of worship.
3. **Chintanam:** Ishta Devata Dhyanam, Upasanam and or Meditation.

It should be noted that different organs of the body perform these three Karmas.

Puja: is Kaya Karyam or performed by the physical body and physical actions.

Japa: is performed by Vak Karyam or organ of speech, the mouth.

Chintanam: is Manaha Karyam or performed by the mind.

Ramana MahaRishi now expands on each of these three karmas. Puja is now explained in shloka # 5 and Japa is explained in shloka # 6.

Shloka # 5:

Swamiji says there are two types of Pujas. He calls them grade 1 and grade 2 pujas respectively.

Grade 1 Puja: is a formal puja performed daily in front of an idol. In its simplest form this puja should consist of offering flowers, Naivedyam and Deeparadhana. There are many books on how to perform a puja. Puja is a required to be performed for spiritual growth. It is also a Raksha for us. The daily puja is a Kavacham. Negative forces are all around us but they will not touch one or one's family. Through Puja you are also setting an example for future generations. Swamiji says, if a father smokes, the child will pick it up. All daily Pujas should end with the prayer:

ॐ सर्वान् भवन्तु सुखिनाः

सर्वान् भवन्तु निरामयाः

सर्वान् भवन्तु भद्राणि प्राप्स्यन्तु

ॐ सर्वान् भवन्तु सुखिनाः सर्वान् भवन्तु निरामयाः

ॐ सर्वान् भवन्तु सुखिनाः सर्वान् भवन्तु निरामयाः

Om, Sarve bhavantu sukhinaḥ

Sarve santu nirāmayāḥ

Sarve bhadraṇi paśyantu

Mā kashchit duḥkha bhāgbhavet

Om Shāntiḥ, Shāntiḥ, Shāntiḥ

May all be prosperous and happy

May all be free from illness

May all see what is spiritually uplifting

May no one suffer

Om peace, peace, peace

Swamji says this prayer has a cumulative effect.

Grade 1 Puja then expands to Grade 2 Puja. In Grade 1, God is worshipped as the idol in front of me. Here God is a small entity.

Grade 2 Puja:

In reality, God is very big. The entire universe is a manifestation of God. Sri Krishna elaborates on God in Gita chapters 7 through 11. In Chapter 11 he provides the Vishwaroopa Darshanam. In Vishnu Sahasranamam God is described as a person in some sholkas while in others he is described as the whole creation. The objective of the Grade 2 Puja is to look at the whole universe as the Ishta Devata or as AshtaMoorthishwara (God with Eight aspects). The eight aspects are: Pancha Bhoota (Earth or *Prithvi*; Water or *Jal* ; Fire or *Agni*; Air or *Vayu* and then Ether or *Akasha*), Surya (all stars), Chandra (all planets and their satellites-non self luminous) and All Jivas.

Grade 2 Puja is service to all living beings (human, animals, plants, and insentient beings). It is common to see a Tulsi

Plant in a Hindu house. The Tulsi is worshipped for all plants. Cow is usually fed on behalf of all animals. One human being is supposed to be fed everyday on behalf of mankind. Swamiji says, before going to bed, one should ask oneself if I have contributed to the AshtaMoorthishwara today or not?

Ramana MahaRishi says Grade 2 puja is a more important puja. One should give more than one takes in. Chinmaya Mission has a logo that says: What I give is more than what I take.

How to perform this grade 2 Puja? Service to the world can be performed in many ways including through offering of time, money and consoling words. Even offering a prayer such as "Sarve bhavantu sukhinaha..." is very impactful.

Service performed with right Bhavana becomes a puja. In such a service arrogance does not rise, one does not seek recognition and there is no expectation of reciprocation. I am fulfilled in the service itself. My service itself becomes a puja. I am happy in the service. It is not my duty to seek acknowledgement. I have no right to ask for gratitude of others for my service.

Karma Eva Phalam. The Karma Yogi considers the performance of the Karma in itself as the Karma Phalam. Such a person enjoys himself as a Karta. He does not want to be a Bhokta.

Swamiji says such a person performs any work with complete devotion and reverence. He performs the work as a dedication to God. In doing so, he performs the work completely and thoroughly. He even performs more than is required. He is not concerned about the result of his work. He does not feel he is giving more and not receiving back in proportion. The performance of the work itself gives him the greatest joy and satisfaction. Such a person is a true Karma Yogi.

Thus from both pujas inner growth occurs.

In Shloka 6 Japa is explained.

Shloka # 6: There are two types of Japas. One is Vachika and other is Manasika.

Vachika is oral recitation. Manasika is mental recitation. Vachika can be in a loud or medium sounding voice. Manasika Japa is quiet without any sound.

Between the two Manasika Japa is more powerful. In this mode one also does not disturb others.

(My Note on Raga and Dvesha: Extreme attachments and extreme aversions are both obstacles on the yogi's path to freedom.

Attachments (raga) arise from our previous experiences of pleasure and happiness. Aversions (dvesha) emerge from previous experiences of pain and suffering. Over time, our sense of self-identity is largely formed by a long list of such likes and dislikes. We define ourselves as a collection of our previous emotional experiences.

We can become subconsciously driven to seek opportunities to repeat previous experiences of pleasure over and over. This is the seed of addiction. The object or person or experience that originally generated pleasure becomes the symbol or substitute for the pleasure itself. Greed and lust and addiction are all downfalls of excessive attachments.

We can also become subconsciously driven to avoid previously painful experiences. Our desire to protect ourselves limits our options in life and clouds our ability to see clearly. As in the case of attachments, we mistake the person or situation or object that caused us pain with the painful experience itself. We can go to great lengths to avoid situations that we are afraid of – whether they are physical, emotional, or spiritual. Fear and hatred are the downfalls of excessive aversion.)

Take away from this class:

Swamiji disclosed the great secret of Karma Yoga. Keep the following in mind as you perform any kind of work including at your office, home, social etc.

Swamiji says such a person performs any work:

- As a dedication to God
- With complete devotion and reverence.
- Completely and thoroughly
- Even more than is required
- Without any concern about the result of his work
- Without feeling he is giving more and not receiving back in proportion.
- In such a manner that the performance of the work itself gives him the greatest joy and satisfaction.
- In such a manner of puja, that arrogance does not rise,
- Without seeking recognition
- Without any expectation of reciprocation.
- As a Karma Yogi and considers the performance of the Karma in itself as the Karma Phalam.
- With the feeling, I am fulfilled in the service itself.
- With the feeling my service itself is a puja. I am happy in the service.
- Without seeking acknowledgement.
- Without asking for gratitude of others for my service.
- With a pleasant smile.
- With great enthusiasm.

Such a person is a true Karma Yogi.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 38

Greetings All,

Lord Krishna talked about the importance of karma up to the 7th verse; and now from the 8th verse onwards, up to 20th verse, the Lord is dealing with the important topic of karma yoga. Hence the chapter's name as well. It is a very important chapter of the Gita. In last class I pointed out Karma Yoga has two components to it.

Karma + Yoga= Karma Yoga.

Here Karma is proper action and Yoga is proper attitude.

Proper Action (karma)

Proper action is divided into three types of actions known as Satvic, Rajasic and Tamasic.

In **Satvic** actions there are more beneficiaries. I may also be benefited. It is Selfless action. I give more and take less. In a final accounting I should have given more and taken less. According to the material world, success is, when I can perform minimum action and get maximum money for it. As per Shastras it is the other way around. According to them I should do more and take less. This is what makes it Selfless.

Rajasic Karma is when the other beneficiaries are few. I am concerned about my immediate family and myself. In today's world people do not even care for their old parents anymore. All this makes it selfish.

Tamasic Karma is when I am benefitted and others are not. Others are actually harmed. It is harmful action.

Satvic Karma provides fast benefit. Rajasic provides slow benefit. Tamasic does not provide any benefit. Tamasic person actually falls down spiritually. He may amass wealth by

cheating and other such means, spiritually, however, he will move away from the shastras.

So a Karma Yogi should increase Satvic Karmas, reduce Rajasic Karma and avoid Tamasic Karmas. Satvic Karmas are defined in Shastra itself as Pancha Maha Yagya's. They **are Proper actions**. They are:

- Deva Yagya: My contribution to Devas.
- Pitra Yagya: My contribution to Forefathers.
- Bramha Yagya: My contribution to scriptures and Guru Parampara.
- Manushya Yagya: My contribution to human beings.
- Bhuta Yagya: My contribution to environment, animals, plants etc.

In Hinduism all plants and animals are worshipped. They are all part of Pancha Maha Yagya. One should lead such a life of contribution. This is proper action.

Proper Attitude (Yoga)

The **second part is proper attitude**. Even the best action will not give benefit if I look down upon the action. (In Tamil :Kadane ne panren or I will do it like repaying a debt, reluctantly). Our attitude must be that every action must be an offering to God. It is called Ishwara Arpana Budhi. This applies to performance of Satvic as well as Rajasic Karmas. Even Rajasic karma performed humbly is uplifting. Thus, we have the saying Daridra narayan. I am not giving to that Daridra but to Daridra Narayan. Similarly we have the expression Nara seva is Narayana seva and Manava seva is Madhava seva.

Even food should be offered to God first and then taken. This is all done to bring about an attitudinal change called Bhavana. Even the mundane task of cleaning a desk, do it as an offering to God. Once I make it an offering to God, I will do it wholeheartedly because I will not do anything inferior for

God. If you do it in this manner, you will do the task well and wholeheartedly, as a Karta.

Whatever I do will produce a consequence. Even if you are doing selfless service in society people will criticize. People will criticize even good work. Whatever be the consequences have a Prasada Budhi; take the good and the bad as a gift from God. This attitude is called Yoga.

With this proper attitude, when I perform every action as an offering to God, I will not worry if it is pleasant or unpleasant. All our actions may not be that pleasant. Swamiji says we do perform unpleasant actions. If I have to take care of my old parent who is not that well, it is a duty. But it may not be pleasant, as it will involve money and inconvenience. Some such person may even pray for the speedy demise of that parent.

For many people going to office is an unpleasant task. Similarly, a housewife also has complaints. Cooking three times, year round, with no entertainment, she may want to dine out, while he may not want to. Arjuna too is faced with an unpleasant task of fighting his own Kith and Kin.

When every action is an offering to God, there is pleasantness in the work. One does not grumble about the work. A karma Yogi works with great enthusiasm. Chinmayananda used to say: "Keep smiling at all times".

Prasada Budhi: Whatever the fruits, I accept it with complete grace, without any complaints. Whenever I don't get the expected result we tend to think of God as unjust. Whatever God gives is a just result of Prarabdha Karma. We should keep in mind that results often come from previous lives as well. When a local cricket umpire gives his decision it is accepted without question. If so, why can't you accept the decision of the universal umpire? This includes the decision of death as well. Whatever God gives, accept it. **When I am not able to**

accept it, pray to God to give me the strength to be able to accept it. Budhi in this shloka means attitude.

This attitude gives Samatvam or a balanced mind brought about by a Prasada Budhi.

What is the benefit of Karma Yoga? The main benefit is very fast spiritual progress. This will be evident in self-knowledge. I will easily grasp self-knowledge. It may even provide some material benefit as a bye-product.

Shloka # 8:

कर्मण्येवाङ्गिरसो श्रुत्वा बुधिनो
॥ ३.८ ॥

“Always do prescribed work; work is superior to inaction. Indeed, even life in the body is impossible without working.”

Action is always superior to inaction. In inaction mind is idle and it becomes the devils workshop. Only a Gyani can remain idle. Citing example of two quiet people who were in an ashram, one felt the ashram was quiet. The other felt it was a like cremation ground. Both people experience quietude differently.

If you resort to inaction, living in the world will be very difficult. Even if you have everything you need, you will still have to act to maintain your body. So, Arjuna, perform action. Perform the actions prescribed in the scriptures. The Pancha Maha Yagya's prescribed are compulsory. You have to contribute to society. It can be through teaching, giving food, giving your time and even smiling at people. Somebody said, “People come from miles to get a smile”.

The Pancha Maha Yagya's can be seen from different angles. It is a commandment from Lord. It is like following a traffic rule. Mature people will follow the law, as it is good for society. Citing JFK “ Don't ask what your country can do for

you, ask what can you do for your country"? Immature person may not follow the law, hence this commandment. If you don't perform the Karmas or omitting your duties you will get special Papam called Prathyavaya Papam and will fall down spiritually. Hence, the language of threat used, by scriptures.

Shloka # 9:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.९ ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ३.९ ॥

“ This world is bound by works other than those done as sacrifice. O son of Kunti. Free from attachment, do work as sacrifice.”

In previous shloka Sri Krishna said Karma Yoga has to be followed. New research shows fear must not be used with a child. It crimps the mind of the child. In USA a child cannot be beaten. Corporal punishment is considered very bad. It must be used very sparingly. Sri Krishna tells Arjuna, You need not take my commandment in previous shloka as Ishwara Agya (command). I used it for immature persons only. So, Karma Yoga should be converted to Ishwara Yagya or worship of the Lord.

From Ishwara Agya it becomes Ishwara Yagya. In this context the following saying comes to mind, “We have enough for man's need but we do not have enough for man's greed.”

So, Karma Yoga is for worship of the Lord. Normally a puja is performed in a short time. Sri Krishna says, you may perform the short puja in the beginning, but ultimately the real puja is to convert your very life into a puja. Let my very living become an offering to you.

Shankara says in Soundarya Lahiri: Oh! Mother, wherever I go, take it as pradakshanam. So also, whatever you are eating, make it an offering to God.

What is Karma Yoga? They say, "Work is worship". I can do worship during puja at home. How can I worship in my office? In Hinduism the whole world is a manifestation of God. Everything is God. You can worship him anywhere.

When work is performed with this attitude our actions will not be binding. There will be no bondage. This worship will lead to liberation.

Why is work the cause of bondage? Our actions create tensions. We wonder whether it will work properly. It results in a state of constant anxiety. We worry if the child will get admission or not? Will I be able to go to America or not? Will I win the contract or not. Every action results in stress.

That is the reason there are so many stress management programs offered today.

By the age of 40 many executives have psychosomatic diseases caused by stress. Some have high blood pressure, some have diabetes and some have high Cholesterol.

Although he has a high salary he cannot even enjoy good food. He cannot take salty food; he cannot eat sweets; he cannot eat sour things because of ulcer; and so on and on. What is the point of all this money if a man cannot enjoy the simple things of life, asks Swamiji.

He says, a man can work and enjoy his life under only one condition. By converting your life into worship and telling yourself that whatever comes is prasada. Only by leading a life of converting work to worship can we lead a stress free work life.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 37

Greetings All,

Shloka # 6:

कार्याणामकारणं कारुण्यं कर्मणामकारणं
कारुण्यं विदुः श्रेयसां कारणं कर्मणामकारणं
कारुण्यं विदुः श्रेयसां कारणं कर्मणामकारणं
कारुण्यं विदुः श्रेयसां कारणं कर्मणामकारणं
कारुण्यं विदुः श्रेयसां कारणं कर्मणामकारणं

“ Controlling the organs of action, he who has his mind dwelling on their objects has a confounded mind; he is said to be a hypocrite.”

Continuing his teaching of the Gita, Swami Paramathananda recapped last week’s class. In this shloka Sri Krishna is clarifying Arjuna’s doubts about Gyana Yoga and Karma Yoga. He says there is no choice between the two. Everybody has to go through karma yoga first which is the only means of purifying the mind and thereafter everyone has to go through gyana yoga, which is the only means of liberation. Gyana yoga means a study of the scriptures under the guidance of a guru. Guru Shashtra Upadesha Sravanam is called Gyana yoga and everyone has to go through it.

Even though there is no choice between these two sadhanas, there is a choice in one’s lifestyle. The choice is between Grihastashrama and Sanyasashrama. While there is no choice

between these two sadhanas, Sri Krishna says, there is a choice with regard to the lifestyle that a person chooses. However, there is no uniform answer to this as it depends upon the type of seeker. Sri Krishna, however, observes that Sanyasashrama is a more difficult one to follow. Sanyasa is not for a majority of the people; it suits only a small minority. It is better to continue in Grihasthashrama throughout or after Grihasthashrama take to Sanyasa. He recommends Grihasthashrama to Arjuna as well. He tells him activity is safer than withdrawal.

Sri Krishna gave three reasons in support of Karma Yoga (or not withdrawing from life) in shlokas 4, 5 and 6 respectively. They are:

1. By avoiding Karma, one cannot get peace of mind. If I have no action, I may think I will have peace of mind, however, inaction does not give you peace of mind.
2. Total Inaction is impossible. Based upon one's Gunas, one will perform action. Try staying at an Ashram for a week.

Swamiji then told the story of a Sanyasi in a temple.

In a temple, there was a Sanyasi sitting; without doing anything and he got daily Prasadam from the temple. A new officer took over the administration. He wanted to bring about changes and improvements. He asked how many people got the Prasadam. He got a list of names and at the end of the list was named the "Quiet Swamiji." If he did not do anything, why should the Quiet Swamiji get prasadam, was his question? The people in the temple told the officer the Swamiji was a respected

person and he should at least talk to him. He asked the Quiet Swamiji why he should get Prasadam for doing nothing. The Quiet Swamiji told him: My doing nothing is very good for the society. He said sitting quiet was not very easy and requested the officer to try it at least for a week. The officer thought

it would be very easy and agreed. Once he sat with the Quiet Swamji for some time, he got restless. After a few hours of quiet time he became extremely restless and gave up. He told the Pujari to give the Quiet Swamiji a double quota of Prasadam daily. Giving up action is not easy. Our gunas and svabhava will pressurize us to act.

3) Not only will action not result in moksha but it can also become a risky proposition. When there are no goals or plans in mind, the mind does not have anything to do, especially since he does not have Gyanam. An idle mind is ideal for seeking many types of enjoyments. In one's mind and imagination too one can enjoy a lot. He then violates Sanyasa and the suppressed emotions erupt. Such a person, wearing an ochre robe, declares himself to be a saintly person to the world, while in reality he is caught up in his sense world. This is called "Mithyachara", meaning what I am thinking, the society does not know. Such a person is also called a "Vimudatma" or a hypocrite. So, Arjuna, considering that inaction is dangerous, lead an active life.

Shloka # 7:

ॐ मनो धारयन् संयम्यैव कर्तव्यं कर्म
ॐ अर्जुन ३.७

"Controlling the sense organs with the mind, he who commences the Yoga of action with the organs of action, unattached, is held to excel, O Arjuna."

What is an ideal Ashrama? As per Sri Krishna, it is Grihasthashrama, where one can fulfill Artha, Kama as well as perform Service to society. Even a wife is called saha dharma charani, which means one gets married not primarily for fulfilling the Artha Kama desires, but for primarily fulfilling my service to the society. In this process I also fulfill my personal desires in a legitimate manner. And therefore, Sri Krishna says, it is better for one to remain in

society.

What is an ideal life to lead? As a Grihastha, as an active person in society, let him regulate his sense organs first and then fulfill his artha & kama. Artha means security, money, possessions, house, status etc. name, fame all related to security while and Kama means entertainment. Shastras give freedom to fulfill the Artha & Kama desire only in Grihasthasrama and not in Sanyasasrama. Sanyasa is exclusively meant for fulfilling mokṣha desire only. Therefore Grihastha should fulfill his desires by regulating the sense organs and without violating dharma and morality.

Citing example of pickle, sometimes we forget that pickle is only a side dish and indulge in it as if it were the main dish. So too, in such a life, Dharma should dominate and not Artha and Kama. Giving must be more than receiving. This is a Dharmic Purusha. Sensory excesses should be controlled by a discriminating mind. It does not mean suppression. Shastras are against suppression. Citing example of a river, stopping the flow of a river will not help, it will cause flood. If you don't stop the flow of water, it will be wasted. Therefore the correct thing to do is to regulate the water by channeling it in a useful direction. Swamiji used the Tamil Saying to further inform us. Kan pona pokkile manam pokalama, manam pona pokkile manitan pokalama; (Should the mind follow whatever the eyes see; and should a man follow his wandering mind?)

After this the Grihastha should take to Karma Yoga that too without getting attached to anything. Whatever he uses is only a means. Shastras say Grihasthasrama is not an end in itself. A wife or husband, both are not permanent. I have to grow out of all my attachments, including for my family, before Yama comes. Such a Grihastha excels a Sanyasi who is not mature and is without knowledge. Sanyasa is horrible if you do not know Vedanta.

Shloka # 8:

कर्मणो यो न प्रमदति श्रेयसां यो न मर्यादां चिन्तति ॥
कर्मणो यो न प्रमदति श्रेयसां यो न मर्यादां चिन्तति ॥
कर्मणो यो न प्रमदति श्रेयसां यो न मर्यादां चिन्तति ॥ 3.8 ॥

“Always do prescribed work; work is superior to inaction. Indeed, even life in the body is impossible without working.”

In the previous shloka Sri Krishna says Karma Yoga is the best path. However shastras do make an exception for one to skip Karma (Grihastha) and go to Gyana Yoga (Sanyasa). The exception occurs when a person has performed Karma Yoga in a previous life.

In this shloka Sri Krishna talks about what is Karma Yoga. In the two slokas, 47 and 48 of the 2nd chapter, Sri Krishna did summarize karma yoga. Now from shlokas 8 to 20 Sri Krishna is describing Karma Yoga. It should be noted that Sri Krishna's teachings are all based upon Vedas. He is presenting it in a more modern form. The content is still the same. In Vedas, in Karma Kanda, Ishavasa and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads, all talk about Karma Yoga. In general karma Yoga can be defined as:

Karma +Yoga=Karma Yoga
Karma here means proper action.

Yoga here means proper attitude towards the action and the result of the action, both respectively.

What is proper action? Actions are of three types. They are Satvic, Tamasic and Rajasic.

Satvic: action is one in which more numbers of people get the benefit. It can include me as well. Example would be a businessman who gets profits but shares it with society. This is also called Nishkama Karma or Self less service.

Rajasic: action is one where beneficiaries are minimum. It is

primarily focused on my near family and me.

Tamasic: action is one that is harmful. I hurt others for my benefit. I do not consider others. In India, a blaring mike is often encountered where there is no consideration of the people around. Any action that disturbs is Tamasic.

Karma Yoga should be primarily Satvic and Nishkama Karma. Shastras prescribe some of these Nishkama Karmas. They are known as Pancha Maha Yagna's. Performing the Pancha Maha Yagna makes our spiritual progress very fast. They purify one's mind. They reduce one's Raga, Dvesha, Kama and Krodha. The Pancha Maha Yagna's are:

1. Deva Puja: Life should consist of religious activity or worship. This may depend upon your Jathi, Varna etc. Sandhyavandanam, Rama Nama Japam all fall into this category. This is dedicating exclusive time for Devas. It is treating Devas as guests. It can also be called prayer time.
2. Pithru Puja: Worship of forefathers. Scriptures give great importance to this puja. Some time should be allocated for this. The ancestor worship can be as per family tradition.
3. Rishi or Brahma Yagna: This is the worship of scriptures. We have a glorious tradition. We have to do something to preserve it and propagate it. Daily Parayanam or study of scripture such as Ramayanam falls under this yagna. Our Gita class is a part of Brahma Yagna. We are also responsible for handing over these teachings to posterity. We should share it with children through daily study. There are ritualistic ways of performing Brahma Yagna as well. In this process we also remember the Rishi Parampara (all Rishi's) who have brought down to this day the knowledge of our scriptures for our benefit.
4. Manushya Yagna: All types of social services fall under this Yagna. Feeding the poor, giving time to orphanages,

giving time to old age homes, schools, etc., all fall under this Yagna. Feeding hungry is the primary Manushya Yagna also called Anna Danam.

5. Bhoota Yagna: This is protection of the environment and all other beings such as animals, plants, the water, air and the earth. This is the reason our scriptures show the animals as Vahanas of Devas. The story of Shakunthala makes the message clearer. Shakuntala, when she had to leave the ashrama of Rishi Kanva, she takes leave of all people, the plants, and even the deer. One particular deer was very dear to her. It pulled her dress, not allowing her to leave. Even the trees bowed their head down. Shakuntala had won the hearts of all by her service.

All these five mahayagnas are compulsory. One who leads such a life is a very blessed person.

Take away from this class:

Please consider incorporating Pancha Maha Yagna practices in your daily life. Swamiji says they will transform you spiritually.

With Best wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Upadesa Saram, Class 3

Greetings to all,

Shloka # 1:

“The results of action flow according to the law of the Creator. Is Karma, action, God? It is insentient.”

Continuing his teaching of Upadesha Saram Swami Paramarthanada refreshed our memory about the last class. He said this text is the essence of the teaching of Lord Shiva and it begins with a negation of the ritualistic practices that were the core belief of the Poorvamimasakas.

In Shlokas # 1 and # 2 Ramana Maharishi addresses this negation. The Poorvamimasakas have a misconception regarding Ishwara and Karma. In the first shloka misconception about Ishwara is negated. In the second shloka the misconception about Karma is negated as well.

In the first shloka Ramana MahaRishi points out to the existence of Ishwara. Vedapramanam and logic supports this. Creation is not an accident. It confirms: Ishwara Asthi.

In second shloka Ramana MahaRishi confirms that it is Ishwara alone who brings out the world as well as the Vedas for the world. In several places Jagat Karta Ishwara is mentioned. He is the giver of Vedas. Negating the proposition of Poorvamimasakas that the world is eternal and that God need not create it, Ramana MahaRishi says both the world and Vedas were brought by God.

Saying that Karma does not produce Phalam also negates their third misconception. Even the laws of Creation cannot produce Phalam. It requires a discriminating person to produce the Phalam. Karma cannot do it nor can the various laws of the universe. Both are Jadam's. Here, Ishwara alone gives the Phalam, keeping the Karma of the person in mind.

Shloka # 2:

“ The fruits of action are transient. Action causes one to fall into the ocean of further action. It obstructs the goal”.

Here Ramana MahaRishi refutes the misconception of the Poorvamimasakas regarding Karma. Ramana MahaRishi gives us three important lessons in this regard. They are:

1. Karma cannot give us liberation. All types of Karmas including Service, devotional, meditational and ritualistic will not produce Moksha.
2. On the other hand Karma is an obstacle to Moksha.
3. Not only is Karma an obstacle, it is actually a cause of bondage as well.

Explaining each lesson further:

1. The misconception that Karma can give is liberation:
 1. The Karma Phalam from all Karmas such as Service, devotional, meditational and ritualistic are finite in nature or Anithya whereas Moksha is defined as infinite or Nithyaha. Vedas reveal this as well. They say all Karma Phalam's are anithyam. Both Mundako Upanishad and Gita say the same.
 2. Logic also reveals it. Action and Reaction are always equal and proportional. Karma always occurs in the finite as place, time and people are known. So, results too have to be finite. Sruthi reveals it as also our own experiences. Therefore Karma Phalam is Anithyam.
2. Karma cannot give us Moksha; it is actually an obstruction: Karma makes a person extrovert. Caught in activity, it leads to more activity. Karma does not give us time for introspection. Only in introspection can we think of Moksha, Gyanam, Vedanta Sravnam etc. A life without leisure does not permit this Self Enquiry. Therefore, Karma is an obstacle to Self Enquiry. In Karma, the mind becomes restless and shallow.
3. Karma cannot give us Moksha, it is actually an obstruction and it is a source of greater bondage.

In Karma one gets more and more enmeshed in Samsara. Karma leads to more Karma. It multiplies itself. Even if you want to get out of it, you cannot. It becomes like a whirlpool, in an ocean.

As we grow older Shastras say we should withdraw from Karma to Vanaprastha. However, in reality, we are not able to do so.

Thus, rebutting the misconception of Poorvamimasakas, Ramana Maharishi says Karma cannot give us Moksha.

Shloka # 3:

“ Action dedicated to God and done without desire purifies the mind.

It aids liberation.”

If Karma is so poisonous, can we renounce it? Shastras say we cannot

renounce it. The reasons are:

1. Our organs are made to be active. Gita chapter 3 also addresses it.
2. All human beings are born with countless desires for wealth, possessions and entertainment. We also tend to amass for our children and grandchildren. This creates Kama within us that in turn beget more and more Karma. Kama (desire) cannot be removed due to our Avidya or Self Ignorance. We do not have a choice. I would like to give up activity, but cannot. In such situations, Vedas come to help us. Vedas say even if Karma is a poison, it can be used in such a manner as to extract medicine from it. Citing example of snake venom, it is used to extract medicine for snakebite. Thus, even a poison becomes useful.

Even the painful experiences of our lives can be helpful if we know what to extract from them. Properly handled Karma is called Karma Yoga. This converts the poison into medicine.

How to convert Karma into Karma Yoga? Ramana Maharishi says, convert all Karmas into a Puja.

Ramana Maharishi is not saying anything new. Gita Chapter 3 also explains the process involved. Ishavasa Upanishad also addresses it.

Vedas say there are two types of Karmas. One is Sakama Karma and other is Nishkama Karma. What is the difference between the two?

Sakama Karma is materialistic Karma that produces primarily worldly benefits. These Karmas too, if offered as an offering to God, become spiritual benefits. Their spiritual benefit is however relatively small. Nevertheless, they too purify one's mind.

Nishkama Karma produces primarily spiritual benefits. These spiritual benefits are often intangible and invisible. It also produces material benefits but only as a byproduct. Nishkama Karma gets us closer to Moksha.

Both Karmas (Sakama and NishKama) must be performed as an offering to God.

Ramana Maharishi has not defined what are Sakama Karma's, as we all know them very well.

What are the NishKama Karmas? The Panch MahaYagna's are Nishkama Karmas. Swamiji will describe them in detail later.

Before starting any Karma, God is always to be remembered. One should strive to perform more and more NishKama Karmas and less and less of Sakama Karmas.

When inner growth is your primary goal, you are then considered a seeker.

When material Growth is your primary goal, even if you a religious person, you are not yet a seeker.

When I am obsessed with what I have, I am a materialistic person. However, when I am obsessed with what I want to be, I am a Karma Yogi. Such a Karma Yogi is a promoter of Moksha.

Swamiji reminded us that Ramana MahaRishi's teaching are very concise and as such should be studied with other scriptures.

Shloka # 4:

“Ritualistic worship, chanting, and meditation are done with the body, voice and the mind; they excel each other in the ascending order.”

What are the NishKama Karmas? Ramana MahaRishi describes them at three levels:

1. Kayika Karma: Here the physical activity is the dominant, while verbal and mental are also present. Many rituals require physical activity. Puja is one such activity. All NishKama Puja performed without seeking materialistic benefit is considered the best. Regular Puja is very important for a seeker. Many people who study Vedanta do not perform Puja. Without Puja transformation does not take place. Many People who are seeking “Who am I” often forget the Puja. They say Ramana MahaRishi never did Puja. They seem to forget that he was at a different level from most of them. Puja is the best method of Kayika Karma.
2. Vachika Karma: is Japa offered to God.
3. Manas Karma: Is Ishwara Dhyanam. With Best Wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 36

Shloka # 3:

“The blessed Lord Said:

O Sinless One! Two kinds of disciplines in this world were set forth by Me of yore-for Samkhyas the disciple of knowledge , and for the Yogins, that of works.”

Recapping shloka # 3, Swami Parmarthananda, said, after

listening to teachings in chapter 2, Arjuna now has questions about the roles Karma Yoga and Gyana Yoga. He thinks there is a choice between the two. This is a mistake. Sri Krishna at no point presented them as optional. All scriptures agree that Gyanam alone can liberate. So there is no choice. All have to go through Gyanam. Before going to Gyanam one has to be qualified for it. This can be done through Karma Yoga. Everybody has to prepare their mind and only then can they go to Gyana Yoga. So there is no choice, both are essential. One prepares the mind and the other removes ignorance. Arjuna did not understand this, hence his question. Sri Krishna wanted Arjuna to fully understand this requirement of scriptures. Here Sri Krishna introduces the concepts of Sadhana and Life style (also called Nishta). Everybody requires both of them. The lifestyles indicated are:

- 1) Pravrithi Marga and
- 2) Nivrithimarga

Pravrithi marga is Grihastashrama and Nivrithi marga is Sanyasa or Gyanashrama.

Swamiji says there are three possible lifestyles for human beings. They are:

1. Grihastashrama followed by Sanyasashrama. Karma , such as money, people etc. One uses these to lead an active life of service and in this process removes the sharp edges of mind. It removes the sharp edges of the personality like kamaḥ, krodhaḥ, lobhaḥ, mohāḥ, etc. This is just like a knife sharpened by a rough surface. After Grihastashrama one goes to Sanyasashrama. This stage is to acquire knowledge. Here the person is free of responsibilities. He should not possess anything. Yoga (acquisition) and Kshema (preservation) are both, burdens. He has to shave his head or grow his hair. Grihastha's duties are prescribed, as are different ones for a Sanyasi. For a grihastha, parayaṇam is rudram, chamakam, sukthani, etc.; for a

sanyasi daily parayanam is upaniṣhad, brahma sutras, bhaṣyam, etc. Even his (Sanyasi's) daily karmas are designed for the pursuit of Gyana yoga; and therefore Gyanam does not require any expenditure. However, Karma does require expenditure. This life style is considered the ideal one.

2. Grihasthashrama followed by a continuation in Grihasthashrama. One performs Karma yoga and then gradually moves to Gyana yoga, all within Grihasthashrama. This life style is a little more difficult but can be managed. In this life style, the Gyanam stage can occasionally be disturbed because of the life of a grihastha. This is just like a knife can occasionally be a screwdriver and a screwdriver too can occasionally be used for cutting. So this life style is strictly Grihasthashrama only.
3. In this third life style one skips Grihasthashrama to Sanyasa. Here the hope of purifying the mind is difficult. Here too one can manage with some difficulty. Here one performs Karma through Japas and service to his Guru. This is strictly Sanyasashrama. It is least favored of all life styles.

The first lifestyle is best and second one is also acceptable. So Arjuna, continue in the Grihasthashrama.

Clarification of some words used in the shloka 3:

Pura means- through the vedas, from past. It is said The Lord created Brahma. The Lord created the world and brought out Brahma from his navel, and at the same time gave the Vedic teaching as well. And that is reason Brahmaji has four heads representing the four Vedas.

Anadh: means the pure one or Arjuna.

Samkhya: means Sanyasi

So pure minded Arjuna, these two lifestyles I have introduced among the human beings; the animals do not have four ashramas; they do not have any problem. Only the human beings have these

two main ashramas, Grihastha and Sanyasa.

Explaining further, a Sanyasi is supposed to remove his sacred thread and give up Gayathri mantra. He now goes to Omkara Mantra. Swamiji explained the Om (A U M) is a shortened version of the Gayathri mantra.

Gayathri has got three lines; each line is simplified into one letter. Tatsavithurvarenyam is simplified into A; bhargodevasya dhimahi is simplified into U, dhiyo yona prachodayat is simplified into uM; A plus U plus uM is AUM or OM.

A Sanyasi should not worry about earning. He was to be dedicated to seeking knowledge and well being of society. In turn, society was supposed to provide for him.

Nivriti: Pursuit of knowledge.

Yoginaha: means extroverted people not committed to knowledge. Karma Yoga and Sadhanas such as Pancha Maha Yagna govern such active people.

Swamiji will explain Pancha Maha Yagna in a future class.

Shloka # 4:

“Man does not achieve freedom from works by abstention from them. None attains perfection through the mere renunciation of works, either.”

Whatever life style one adopts one has to go through Karma Yoga and then study the scriptures in a systematic manner under a Guru.

In this shloka Sri Krishna tells Arjuna, you should not avoid action. He gives three reasons for this:

Reason # 1: By avoiding or giving up action, you cannot get Moksha. You cannot move away from duties. Running away from problems does not solve it. Our true problem is internal,

although we think it lies outside us.

In this Shloka Naishkaryam and Sidhi both mean Moksha.

In scriptures there are statements that say that by giving up Karma one can get liberation. Sri Krishna clarifies that wherever it says renouncing Karma will get liberation, it should also state that Gyanam should support Karma. Sanyasa works only when it is backed by scriptural studies.

Explaining what scriptural studies mean, Swamiji said, in his ashrama when they were studying the bhaṣyam, some of the Shankaracharya's bhashya was so deep, it took 15 continuous days of studies to complete one mantra.

By mere renunciation, wearing an Ochre robe, one cannot get Moksha. Sanyasa does not guarantee Moksha.

Shloka # 5:

"None indeed , even for a moment , remains without doing work. All, being dependent, are made to work by the constituents of Prakrti."

Reason #2: Giving his second reason for not giving up action, Sri Krishna says, it is impossible to give up action. Everybody will be forced to perform some action based upon his nature. A man cannot give up physical action and even if one does so, your mind will become active. This is because everyone's prakrithi causes him or her to act. Maya has three Gunas that pervade creation. The ornament will reflect the type of gold it is made up of. Thus, we have gold with more silver, lead and copper that reflects in the ornament. Traits of Karanam (cause) will be there in the effect as well. Parents are evident in their children. The three Gunas, Satva, Rajas and Tamas are

present in different proportions in each one of us. The human being is helpless. The most you can do is channelize these energies. People try to stop thought in meditation; Swamiji says this is a mistake. Vedic meditation is more into

directing your mind rather than stopping thought. Any type of meditation that we prescribe involves the appropriate thought. And therefore Sri Krishna says that if you try to give up your action, wherever you go, you will start fresh action. If you become a sanyasi and go to Rishikesh and if you are a rajasic person, your leadership qualities will exert and you will form a sanyasi association. So, even if you renounce action, you will still find action. So, Arjuna, please do what you have to.

Shloka # 6:

“Controlling the organs of action, he who lets his mind dwell on their objects has a confounded mind; he is said to be a hypocrite.”

Reason # 3: The third argument offered by Sri Krishna is that giving up action is very risky and can be counter productive. One can go to Vedanta only after purifying worldly desires. Everybody has got certain natural needs; so they talk about the hierarchy of needs; first the need is for survival; then food and clothing; and thereafter the need is for entertainment; thereafter the need is to be wanted; I want to love someone and I want to be loved by someone. Human mind has different levels of needs including needs for self-respect, doing something in the society, so that the society will remember me.

A person has to go through them and accomplish some self-respect, as they say, to let the ego ripen.

The ego has to ripen before it falls. This can happen only in society and through family life. Sanyasa Marga is a one-way traffic. A grihastha can become a sanyasi; but a sanyasi cannot become a grihastha. That is why Dayananda Swamiji used to tell us; when he went to Uttarakashi, he met many sadhus, sanyasis and he was talking with them. During discussions, Swamiji said: I want to take sanyasa. Many of those sanyasis told him: Do not take that

decision. One of them said: You know, somehow after a fight with my wife, I left and took up sanyasa, because one day my early morning coffee was delayed. And now here, on the first day, Himalayas and Ganges were wonderful and fine and I thought this is the best place to stay for life; but on second day, third day, fourth day, it was the same Ganga, same Himalayas, and if you ask for bhikṣha, the bhikṣha would also be the same; unlike in my house, where it was different every day. Here, you will have have no choice.

A Grihastha cannot become a Brahmachari. If ego has not matured it can miss a lot. If mind is not ready for Sanyasa, it can misfire. It can become a life of Mithyachara. Pressure mounts in mind for pleasures. So it is risky to skip and go to Sanyasashrama.

Take away:

1. It is only by going through life's ups, downs and travails that eventually our ego will ripen and hopefully fall off. Running away from life will not help.
2. Even if you run away, as Swamiji points out, the grass is not greener on the other side. Sanyasa may not help. With Best Wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Upadesa Saram, Class 2

Greetings All,

Continuing his teaching of Upadesha Saram, Swami Paramarthananda said, in the last class we discussed that this

book contains the essence of Veda Shastram. Vedas are divided into two groups:

1. Veda Poorva- also called Karma Kanda is the step used for preparation of the mind.
2. Vedanta – also called Gyana Kanda is the step used to remove ignorance of the mind.

Karma Kanda is done in an intelligent manner in which one enjoys the worldly life and desires but also allows one to grow spiritually. In this stage fulfillment of worldly desires is primary while spiritual growth is secondary.

As one grows older in Karma Kanda, this process starts to reverse. Now, the desire for the material world diminishes and desire for spiritual progress increases. This is Gyana Yogyatha Prapthihi.

Gyana Yoga itself is for Gyana Prapthi. It allows us Jivatma and Paramatma Aikyam.

Upadesha Sara's shloka's 1-13 are related to Veda Poorva or Karma Yoga. Shloka's 14-30 are related to Gyana Prapthi.

Karma Yoga is our first focus. Upadesha Saram is a teaching of Lord Shiva to Poorvamimamsaka students. Therefore, it begins with negation of Poorvamimamsaka philosophy. Poorvamimamsaka's have certain misconceptions. Ramana MahaRishi removes those misconceptions. Poorvamimamsaka's believe in rituals and not Vedanta. They considered Vedanta a non-fertile desert portion of a country.

The first misconception of Poorvamimamsaka's is that there is no God. If asked who created the world, they say both (God and world) are Mithyas, they are not created. If God does not create Karma Phalam, who does? Or, who is the Karma Phala Datha? Their answer is that the Niyathi of Karma creates Karma Phalam. Citing examples, Gravity does not need a God it follows laws of gravity. If you light a fire under water, the

water will boil, no God comes in, to do this. They feel, the laws of physics, the moral laws, the laws of rituals etc., govern all actions. There is no Karma Phala Datha. The Karma itself is the Phala Datha. This is their second misconception.

There are many rituals and there are special rituals. These special rituals, such as Avahanthi Homam, provide finite results such as blessing of a child, money etc. These are, however, Anithya Phalam.

There are also certain special rituals that produce Nithyaphalam. It is called the eternal heaven, Swarga. It is similar to Christianity and Islam's concept of heaven.

In this context Swamji cited Nachiketas who told Yama: Swarga is a fine place because you are not there. In this Swarga there is no disease or death.

Moksha is immortality. If Swarga provides it, why do we need Vedanta, is the question posed by Poorvamimasaka's. So, the third misconception of Poorvamimasaka's was that Karma is Moksha Janakam.

Shloka # 1:

" The results of action flow according to the law of the Creator. Is Karma , action, God? It is insentient."

No laws can give phalam. You require a judge. An intelligent principle decides the phalam as per law. Actions alone are not enough to consider, one has to take into account the motive as well. Citing example of the Palavan Bus driver who hits a man in order to save him from a major accident, one has to take into account the motive of the driver as well. Without a judge, a judgment cannot be given.

Law + Judge=Phalam

Law itself is Jadam. It does not discriminate. The intelligent principle is required to preside over the law. The judge has

to be well versed in Jivan Rashi (Past, present, all Lokas etc.). The judge has to be omniscient. When Karma is relevant to a family all members of the family simultaneously exhaust their Karmas. The Phalam has to be versatile. Millions of such events occur in the world and have to be addressed simultaneously. This requires a super-intelligent principle.

The word Kartu means Creator. By using God as the Creator, creation has manifestation and un-manifestation. As per Vedas the Universe comes and goes. Modern science also says the universe was created. This requires a Creator.

A question can be asked, as to why can't the world be created accidentally. Citing a story about Shakespeare, it seems there was an explosion at the printing press and all letters got thrown out. Later putting them together resulted in creation of Shakespeare's works.

Can accidentally even a shloka be written? How can we accept the concept of an accidental Creator? Creation requires a creator and the Vedas. Both originate from the Lord. Therefore first misconception of Poorvamimasaka's is negated.

Law is blind and it requires an intelligent interpreter. This God is the Creator of Karma Phalam. Every experience I go through is a Karma Phalam. It was produced by an action of my own. Therefore, I am responsible for my Karma Phalam.

Relationship of Cows, Parent- Child and a good friend are all required. They are all Karma Phalas. The Phalam comes from God's hands. Why can't law books regulate Karma? It requires an agent to regulate. Vedas are Jadam. They require an interpreter. Physical laws are also Jadam as are moral and other laws. So, Ishwara is the Karma Phala Datha. This is, obviously, not accepted by Poorvamimasaka's.

Here we are talking about Vyavaharika Saguna Ishwara who is different from Vyavahrika Saguna Jiva and Vyavahrika Saguna

Jagat. This is based upon a Vyavharika Drishti. Here Jiva and Ishwara are different and as per Vedanta, Karma is also Vyavahrika.

In Paramarthika Drishti, Jiva and Ishwara are one. One should not confuse and mix up Vyavahrika and Paramarthika Drishti's.

Shloka # 2:

“ The fruits of action are transient. Action causes one to fall into the ocean of further action. It obstructs the goal.”

Karma does not produce results. Ishwara produces Karma Phalam per Karmic law. In this shloka Ramana MahaRishi negates the second misconception of the Poorvamimasaka's. They claim that some Yagas produce Swarga Loka. Here Ramana Maharishi negates their idea and says, no Karma can produce eternal result as the Phalam is always Anithyam.

Now a question comes up. Poorvamimasaka's also believe in Vedapramanam. They ask, “ If you believe in Vedas, they say Swarga is eternal. If so, why don't you accept our Nithya Karma Phalam?” Vedantin's counter this with the question “ There are places in Vedas that say Swarga is not eternal or it is Anithyam.” Which word of Vedas should we accept?

My Note: Vyavahrika and Paramarthika explained.

The scriptures speak about two different frames of references to understand the relationship between the Man, the world and the God. They are the Vyavaharika state and the Paramarthika State.

The Vyavaharika state refers to the Dual (Dwaita) state of reference. Most people understand the Universe from this plane. They perceive the duality of object and the subject. There is the world (Jagat) and there is Individual (Jiva) and the God (Ishwara) all separate. The Paramarthika state refers to the Absolute Non-dual (Advaita) state of reference, where

only Brahman/Atman is. There is no difference between God or Individual or the world. The former is a temporary and relative state of existence whereas the latter is the absolute-permanent state of existence.

With Best Wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 35

Shloka # 1:

Arjuna Said:

“O Krsna! If your view is that knowledge is superior to work, why do you bid me to undertake this fearful work of war?”

Starting the teaching of chapter 3 Swami Paramathanada said, this chapter begins with a question from Arjuna. Arjuna is confused about the teaching in chapter 2. In chapter 2, Sri Krishna, at different times, said: “wise people do not grieve in life”, “Wisdom alone is solution for all grief” and “Ignorance is cause of all sorrow and knowledge frees one from all sorrow”. At the end of chapter 2 Sri Krishna emphasizes Gyana Yoga in the Sthitha Pragyaha. Sri Krishna talked a lot about Gyanam and Gyani. At the end of the chapter 2 he says, a Gyani will not have delusion in life.

In chapter 1, Arjuna’s primary problems were diagnosed as sorrow and internal conflict. In chapter 2, Sri Krishna says Gyanam is the solution for all sorrows and internal conflicts. Gyanam can be obtained only from a Guru or a Gurukulam. In Chapter 2, in its middle, Sri Krishna talks a lot about Karma, while in beginning and end he talks of a lot about Gyanam. Here, he advised Arjuna to perform Karma. Arjuna’s question is, should I follow the path Gyana Yoga or the Karma Yoga?

Arjuna is naturally inclined towards Karma. In this instance, however, he is looking for an escape. Normally, being a Kshatriya he is inclined to fight, however, in front of Bhishma, Drona and Other relatives he does not want to fight. Even as he wants to run away from the battlefield he also remembers Sri Krishna's teaching that he should stand up and fight as it is Dharma. He now blames Sri Krishna rather than himself, saying you are confusing me. Having glorified Gyanam, O Krishna, you are asking me to perform the Karma of battle.

Sri Krishna has not confused Arjuna. His confusion is due to his own improper understanding. Swamiji says it is not unusual that this question, if Karma Yoga is better than Gyana Yoga, often comes up. People even ask this about Bhakthi, Raja and Kundalini Yoga's as well. Karma Yoga should not be compared to Gyana Yoga. Comparison is possible only when there are options. Both Karma and Gyana are not optional. Both are equally important for a person. Karma yoga makes you fit for Gyana Yoga. Karma purifies your mind. Arjuna was asked to perform Karma to purify his mind and then gain knowledge. Unfortunately Arjuna has been taking in Sri Krishna's teaching through a filter. He basically wants to avoid Karma.

Sri Krishna, in his greatness, does not blame Arjuna for this confusion. He answers the question with great elation on the topic of Karma Yoga.

Swamiji clarified that in Sanskrit one word can have many meanings depending on its context. Thus, the word Budhi can mean: Object of knowledge, instrument of knowledge and Knowledge itself. In this shloka it means Knowledge itself.

Arjuna's question is after asking me to obtain knowledge you are now asking me to perform action knowing that the action cannot produce new knowledge. Karma cannot produce any new knowledge, that too when the action is unpleasant (terrible). In this instance it even involves blood. We know that certain

actions are unpleasant and certain actions are pleasant. For Arjuna if it were a pleasant action, it would have been fine. But you are engaging me in bloody action that too one involved with killing. Even as he was seeing his dear Bhishma and dear Droṇa standing the thought of killing them was too revolting.

Shloka # 2:

Arjuna Said:

“By words that seem confused, You bewilder my intelligence, as it were. Therefore set forth one sure course by which I may attain the highest good.”

Arjuna says: Sri Krishna, you are using confusing statements or at least to me it appears so. Looks like I have not grasped your teaching properly. Please clarify.

Swamiji says, Vedanta emphasizes thinking. Blind acceptance is not advocated. Thus Bramhasutra is a logical analysis of scriptures. The process of preaching is initial and superficial, while teaching is for long term and it brings value to you. Through teaching alone internal transformation occurs.

Shloka # 3:

Sri Krishna Said:

“O sinless one! Two kinds of disciplines in this world were set forth by Me in times of yore-for the Samkhyas the discipline of knowledge and for the Yogins, that of works.”

Swamiji says Swami Dayanada Saraswathi used to say: “Value is a value only when the value of the value is valued.” Teaching conveys value of the value. Preaching only conveys the value. Example of this would be answering why Karma Yoga should be performed before Gyana Yoga.

Here too Sri Krishna is teaching Arjuna; He is not telling him to go and fight rather he is teaching him why karma is important. Sri Krishna now explains why Karma Yoga is important. This third shloka is an important one and is the

foundation of chapter 3.

Scriptures point out that Karma Yoga Sadhana and Gyana Yoga Sadhana are both compulsory. It is like washing hand before eating. You clean your hand and then eat.

Karma Yoga makes you Gyana Yogyatha Prapthihi. Gyana Yoga has always been presented in scriptures at the end, not the beginning or the middle. There are of course exceptions. Ninety-nine percent of people are not prepared for Gyanam. Ramana Maharishi was an exception. What worked for Ramana does not work for all. As per Shastras people like Ramana Maharishi also have gone through Karma Yoga, probably in some previous life. Once you have prepared, you can go through Gyana Yoga as well.

Paralleling this, scriptures also talk of two types of lifestyles called Ashramas. The word Nishta means Ashrama or lifestyle. Scriptures mention four ashramas. Of the four, Grihastha Ashram and Sanyasa Ashram are pertinent here.

Pravrithi Nishta: It is Karma Pradhana Ashram

Nivriti Nishta: It is Gyana Pradhana Ashram.

Note: The word Samkhya in the shloka is associated with Gyanam.

Swamiji says a human being can lead life in three different ways. They are:

1. Go to Grihasthashrama, follow Karma Yoga, purify, then take up Sanyasa Yoga and become free.
2. Go to Grihasthashrama follow Karma Yoga, purify, continue in Grihasthashrama and gradually change to Gyana Yoga and become free. Such a person is called Grihastha Gyani.
3. Without Grihasthashrama go to Sanyasa. In Sanyasa perform Karma Yoga unique to Sanyasi's. A Sanyasi can

perform Japas, Guru Seva, and other such exclusive activities identified for them. After purification he has to go to Gyana Yoga and attain freedom. Such a person is called a Sanyasi Gyani.

Both Sadhanas have to be completed. Citing an example: Screwdriver is used for screwing and a knife is used for cutting. You can cut fruits with a screwdriver as well while a knife can also occasionally screw.

Thus:

- Grihasthashrama is Karma Pradhana.
- Sanyasashrama is Gyana Pradhana.

Therefore Arjuna, do your duty. Right now your duty is to fight.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Upadesa Saram, Class 1

Starting his teaching on Upadesha Saram, Swami Paramarthananda said it is another work of Bhagavan Ramana MahaRishi. It is a smaller work consisting of 30 verses. Upadesha Sahasri was another scripture written by Adi Shankaracharya, a large work consisting of 700 verses and 19 chapters. Upadesha Saram is a comprehensive work presenting the entire Vedic teaching in a nutshell. It presents all Sadhana's in a nut shell. Sad Darshanam another work of Ramana MahaRishi is primarily about Gyana Yoga while other yogas are only hinted at. Self-Enquiry is Gyana Yoga.

In this text all Sadhanani's are dealt with while Gyana Yoga is the primary Sadhana. Most of us are not ready for Gyana

Yoga. Gyana Yoga requires Gyana Yogyatha. Without preparation Gyana Yoga will fail. We will not only fail, but we will also lose faith in Gyana Yoga in this process.

Gyana Yogyatha Sadhanani are the stepping stones for Gyanam. Although they are a secondary spiritual Sadhana, they are required to make the primary sadhana work. They are very important even though they do not give us moksha.

Any scripture dealing with Karma and Gyana is called comprehensive. Upadesha Saram is comprehensive. Swami Dayananda Saraswathi considered this the second most important book, first one being Tatva Bodha. Tatva Bodha, Upadesha Saram and Gita's Chapter 13 are considered the best texts for beginning Vedanta.

Like other works of Ramana MahaRishi, Upadesha Saram was written at the request of a devotee. Ramana himself was not inclined towards Vedantic writing. It was his devotee Murugesan who asked him to write this book. Murugesan was a Tamil scholar. He was writing a book based upon a story of the puranas. In this story, Shiva comes to the world as a Vedantic Guru or Rishi. The story goes that some ascetic householders attached to the Karma Kandi or Poorva Mimamsa tradition were performing a Yaga. Poorva Mimamsi's or Karma Kandi's believed in rituals. They believed rituals would take them to heaven (Swarga). They also believed rituals, would give them the four Goals of Hindu Life: Kama, Artha, Dharma & Moksha .

Furthermore, they believed that rituals themselves gave the phalams and one need not believe in God. They believed Veda is eternal, world is eternal, and rituals themselves give us what we want without a God . They were non-believing Atheistic People. Due to some obstacle they were not able to come out of Karma Kanda. Lord Shiva wanted to help them and educate them. So, Shiva staged a drama. Murugesan wanted to write about this.

The story goes, one day these Rishi's decided to perform a Yaga. At that time Shiva called Vishnu and requested his help. They were friends. Shiva wanted Vishnu to come down as Mohini. He agreed to come down himself as an enchanting Brahmachari Bhikshu. He suggested they ask the Rishi's and Rishi's wives respectively, for Bhiksha. Mohini decided to go to the Yagashala. The Rishi's saw Mohini and enchanted by her, followed her. But suddenly she disappeared. They realized something was wrong and they returned embarrassed. Upon return they noticed that their wives were not there.

At the same time Shiva as a Bhikshu had gone to the houses of Rishi's and their wives seeing his enchanting form followed him. The Rishi's ran back home and saw their wives following Shiva. In anger the Rishi's attacked Shiva and used the mantra Abhicharaka Karmani to destroy him. Shiva, however, just stood and smirked at them. The Rishi's understood that there was something wrong with their rituals. Then, in defeat, they surrendered to the Bhikshu. Now, Shiva coming into his form taught them the limitations of Karma. They were told they have to come to Atma Gyanam. This was taught to Karma Kandi Rishi's in Darukavanam in Darukavana Upadesha. This was the story in Puranas that Murugesan was writing about. He was at the stage of writing about Shiva's Upadesha. He wanted Ramana MahaRishi to complete the Upadesha part. Murugesan was a great Bhakta of Ramana and he believed Ramana was Lord Shiva himself. Acceding to his request Ramana MahaRishi composed Shiva Darukavanam Upadesha Sara. Upadesha means teaching while Sara means essence of.

In this teaching, Karma, proper handling of Karma, limits of Karma and beyond, are discussed. In Vedas too Karma Kanda is a Gyana Yogyata Sadhanam. Ramana composed it originally in Tamil for Murugesan and called it Upadesha Undhiyan (a type of composition). Later Ramana himself recomposed it in Sanskrit, Telugu and Malayalam. So, he wrote the book in four languages. Ramana himself wrote all four. This is the background for

Upadesha Saram.

In this text Anushtup chanda metre is used. It is the smallest metre. It is sung in Punnagavarali Ragam. The Saram is in two parts.

Shlokas 1-13: Gyana Yogyatha Sadhanani. A variety of Karmas as per Karmakanda are described. They include:

- Kayika Karma: Typical actions
- Vachika Karma: Vocal actions
- Manasa Karma: Upsasana action including Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali.

Shlokas 14- 30 is Vedanta Sara or Gyana Yoga.

Shloka #1:

In this shloka Ramana MahaRishi refutes Poorvamimasaka's philosophy of ritualism. The misconception of Poorva Mimamsa is that Karma is without God. Sri Krishna says Karma without God will result in a huge bondage. Every stage of Karma must involve God. God is involved in karma in all stages. In initial stage, God receives all Karmas. Hence God is called Bhokta. Later God molds this Karma into a Karmaphalam. Bhagavan converts every Karma into phalam. This transformation has to consider the many, many, laws governing the world that are involved in the conversion. Only someone who knows all laws can perform such a complex conversion.

Why do human efforts fail? Because we are not able to consider all laws that apply to our effort. This is the first factor.

The second mistake is that Karmi's think Karma can give us an eternal Swarga. This is a misconception. Karma phalam is anithyam. Money is produced in time and lost in time. As the cause, so is the effect. The Veda read by Poorvamimasakas will not produce Moksha.

In shloka 1 Ramana negates these two ideas. In current world

stress is a big problem. Meditation helps with stress. However, God is the only stress buster. Karma (godless) Produces Stress. Karma Yoga produces Shanthi. Shloka #1 establishes God.

Note: At the end of the class Dr. Janaki Raman gave us a beautiful portrayal of Ramana Maharishi's life. He is a blessed man in that he has seen Ramana in person.

With Best Wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Kaivalya Upanishad, Class 13 – Summary

Greetings,

Swamiji summarized the Kaivalya Upanishad's teachings today. This Upanishad is known by its name as it gives Kaivalyam or Moksha or non-duality to the seeker. There is no second thing in the cosmos to limit me, not space, nor time nor object to limit me. Spatial, temporal and objectal limitations do not exist for me. This Upanishad is from the Atharvana Veda. It has all essentials of Vedantic teachings, although it is not part of the 10 important Upanishads mentioned by Shankaracharya. Being a part of Atharvana Veda it has the same Shanthipatha (opening hymn) as others. The Shanthipatha seeks to make the mind, body and thought capable of obtaining knowledge. Vignā-nivṛithi and Karana Yogyata are its goals.

Mantra 1:

The first mantra is introduction of the student Ashvalayana

Rishi approaching Brahmaji himself. The Student knows what he wants. He is a prepared disciple. Indications of a well-informed disciple are:

1. He primarily wishes moksha.
2. He knows moksha can be obtained only through Gyanam.
3. Gyanam can only be obtained only through Shastra Pramanam.
4. He knows that Shastram will reveal its content only under a competent Acharya.

Mantras 2-4:

Brahmaji presents Gyana Sadhane (means) and Gyana Phalam (benefits). Gyana Sadhane: There are two means available. They are:

1. Primary or direct or Sakshat.
2. Sahakari or supportive cause.

Citing an example, for a mango tree the primary cause is the mango seed. Secondary causes can include the soil, water, pesticides etc. Secondary causes cannot, however, produce a mango.

Primary Sadhanani: Sravanam is a consistent and systematic study under a competent Guru.

Mananam is until I am convinced of all my doubts. It is turning knowledge into conviction by removal of intellectual obstacles.

Nidhidhyasanam is removal of conditioning or reorientation. My poornatvam does not depend on external factors. This re-orientation or de-conditioning may take decades. Removing emotional obstacles is Nidhidhaysanam.

The above three together are called Vedanta Vichara.

The three sadhanas (the primary means) 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.

The Sahakari (secondary means) Sadhanani are all the values mentioned in shastras. Brahmaji places emphasis on one value namely Tyaga or gradually learning to drop all your dependencies. The fewer supports I use, the better. Citing example of memory, years ago one memorized, however, today one depends on computers. In this process we have lost our ability to perform simple mental mathematics. We use TV, Computers etc. as external supports to cure our loneliness. There is nothing wrong with being lonely. Go for a walk, alone. Live in an Ashram, alone. This training to drop dependencies is called Tyagaha.

The advantage of Tyaga is I am ready to lose anything at any time. This can be born out of discrimination or devotion. Shankara emphasizes the Sanyasa aspect of Gyanam. Sanyasa is our inner preparedness to lose. Shankaracharya's four Ashram's are for this purpose.

Gyana Phalam: Is Moksha or freedom. Freedom from emotional issues is Jivan mukti. Freedom from cycle of birth and death is Videhi Mukti.

Mantras 5-10:

Dhyanam is the topic discussed. Three topics are discussed. They are:

1. Dhyana Sadhanani
2. Saguna Dhyanam and
3. Nirguna Dhyanam

Dhyana Sadhanani include:

Desha-Or place of meditation, should be quiet and clean.

Kala: Or time of meditation, should be when the mind is Satvic. When the mind is alert and non-wandering.

Asanam: Or seat of meditation, it should not be too soft or too hard.

Sharira Sthithi: Or the condition of body, sense organs, mind and intellect should be receptive.

Meditate as a Sanyasi not as a worldly person. Mediate free of worries. Drop all roles such as wife, husband etc., during meditation. If at all, evoke role of Shishya or Devotee. Offer namaskara to Guru before meditation so that his teaching is evoked.

Saguna Dhyanam:

This is meditation on Ishta Devata. Kaivalya recommends Shiva Dhyanam. One can choose any Devata. Aneka Roopa and Vishwa Roopa Ishta Devata are the same.

Nirguna Dhyanam: Means meditating on Brahman without roopam.

Which Dhyanam to perform is a question that can come up? It depends. If one is in early stages, Saguna Dhyanam before Vedanta study may work. After the study, Nirguna Dhyanam will benefit.

Phalam: Saguna Gyana Yogyata.

Nidhidhyasanam: or Gyana Nishta is when Gyanam gets assimilated. Aham Brahma Asmi becomes spontaneous. Ramana Maha Rishi said " If 100 people call me a donkey, I still do not have any doubts that I am human." This is conviction or Nishta.

Mantra 12-15:

Brahmaji introduces Sravanam and Mananam. He uses The Arani Manthanam or churning as an example. There is only one consciousness that manifests as Jiva (micro) and Ishwara (macro). Due to two reflecting mediums we have this Jiva and Ishwara distortions. It is only a seeming distortion. Just as the face is same even when it reflects on

a convex or concave mirror.

What type of distortion is it?

In micro it is the Sharira Trayam with inferior attributes or Nikrishta Guna such as Limited knowledge, Power etc., resulting in the Created.

In macro distortion it is with superior attributes or Utkrishta Gunas such as Sarva Shakthi, Vyapak etc., resulting in the Creator.

While Original Consciousness (OC) does not have attributes, attributes come from the distorting media. Our goal is to see Jiva without attributes. Karanatvam of Ishvara and Jiva are all seeming attributes of OC evident through media. Thus OC is the Karta, Bhokta and Bhogam. Removal of attributes and maintaining Consciousness results in Jivatma Paramatma Aikyam.

Mantras 16-23:

This is the Mahavakya portion. It also discusses Jivatma Paramatma Aikyam. Each mantra is a Mahavakya.

To this Atma is added the prefix Jiva and Parama. Removal of Jiva and Parama is called Vilakshanam. Once you remove the name and form there is neither the wave nor the ocean. This is "Aham Brahma Asmi". The Wave is not afraid of mortality. The phalam is Moksha.

Mantras 24-24:

This is the conclusion of Upanishad or the Upasamhara. Brahmaji says, suppose one does not understand the teaching, do not give up. One has to go through some additional coaching. Karma and Upsana are the preparatory classes. Shastra Parayanam is one such Karma. Kaivalya Upanishad Parayanam itself will make you prepared. Other Vedic or Non Vedic Parayanams can also help. This Karma will remove all obstacles of mind also called Duritham. Our past Karmas are

usually the cause of these obstacles. After preparation come back to Kaivalya sravanam, mananam and nidhidhyasanam.

While the Upanishad recommends Sri Rudra Parayanam it is not compulsory.

Thus the seeker gets the knowledge and the impact of teaching increases. Then he obtains Jivan mukti and eventually Videhi mukti. The word Kaivalyam is mentioned in the concluding mantras.

With Best Wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 34 – Chapter 2 Summary

Swamiji offered a summary of chapter 2. The chapter is divided into four parts:

1. Shlokas 1-10: Arjuna's Sharanagati
2. Shlokas 11-38: Gyana Yoga Part
3. Shlokas 39-58: Karma Yoga Part
4. Shlokas 54-72: Sthita Pragyaha Part

He summarized each topic.

Shlokas 1-10, Arjuna Sharanagati.

This was a continuity of chapter 1 where Arjuna discovered the problems of Samsara in the oddest place, the battlefield. Raga, Shoka and Moha are the problems associated with Samsara. Raga is attachment, a human problem and while it varies from individual to individual, it is also a universal problem. Arjuna discovers it with intensity in the battlefield. With

attachment comes sorrow or Vishadha. I don't want to lose anything I am attached to. Any loss, actual or imaginary, I am not able to withstand. Arjuna was intensely attached to Bhishma, Drona and others. He is unable to handle even the imaginary loss of these people close to him and this is called Shokaha. Once the mind is caught in Raga and Shoka it loses its capacity to discriminate between Dharma and Adharma. Incapacity to decide what is the right course of action in a given situation sets in. This lack of capacity to discriminate is called Mohaha. Thus Raga, Shoka and Moha together are known as Samsara. Arjuna discovers this problem and also tries to solve it. Arjuna even gives Sri Krishna a lecture on his solution to the problem. He feels fighting is Adharma and wants to run away from the battlefield. Sri Krishna allows Arjuna to express himself.

In chapter 2 Arjuna's dilemma is continued. He has not yet surrendered himself to Sri Krishna as such Sri Krishna keeps quiet. Then, Arjuna feels Karpanya Dosha, feeling helplessness and only then surrenders to Sri Krishna. He is like a drowning person who finds Sri Krishna to hold on to. The surrender has to be real and from the heart. Arjuna has to empty his mind in this process so that Sri Krishna can fill it up with wisdom. A Sanyasi shaving his head is a symbol of removing one's false notions. Arjuna, the Yajamana, now becomes Arjuna, the Shishya. Sri Krishna also changes roles from the Partha Sarthy to Gita Upadesha Jagat Guru. Gyani becomes a Guru because of his Shishya; hence Shashtanga namaskaram is practiced. It shows emptiness of his mind and his humility. An arrogant intellect will find it extremely difficult to do namaskara and Arjuna is the most arrogant person in the world because he is a Kshatriya, a Dhananjaya with many names, glories, wealth, position and beauty and wives; Arjuna is such a person but he surrenders. So, Arjuna now asked for knowledge.

Shlokas 11-38: Gyana Yoga

From these shlokas the Gita teaching now starts. This is the main theme of chapter 2. Shlokas 11-25 are very important as they convey the essence of Upanishads. Gyana Yoga or Samkhya Yoga is the theme. The gist of these shlokas is that Sri Krishna discusses the nature of the individual. Who am I, is being discussed. Unfortunately, we do not have a clear understanding of ourselves. While we study many things, we never study ourselves. Sri Krishna shows we are not the physical body. This is our biggest misconception. The second mistake we make is thinking "I am the mind". This body is only a temporary dress that we discard at death. Even in deep sleep we still exist but don't function through the physical body. At that time the body and mind are set aside. They are like one's spectacles (glasses) that are removed before going to bed. So, if I am not the body or the mind, then who am I? I am the consciousness principle, Chaitanyam. What is this consciousness? Describing it, Sri Krishna says:

1. It is not part of body, nor product of body and not even a property of the body.
2. It is the independent identity that permeates and enlivens this body.
3. Its capacity to permeate, enliven and illuminate is not limited to just one body.
4. Its capacity extends beyond the boundaries of this body and it continues to exist even after the body collapses.

Explaining the Consciousness principle with an example, Swamiji says:

1. The light you experience on your hand is not part of the hand.
2. It is not limited to the hand or by the hand.
3. The light survives even after the hand disappears. The only difference is that when the hand is there; light is visible; and when the hand is removed; light continues but you are not able to see it.

This consciousness is called the Atma. Sri Krishna describes the six main features of the Atma:

1. Atma is Nityaha or eternal.
2. Atma is Satyaha, or it is reality that exists independently, while everything else depends on Atma.
3. Atma is Sarvagathaha or it is all pervading. In body, it is contactable, when it is outside body, it is invisible.
4. Atma is Aprameya or it is ever the Experiencer and never the Experienced. Anything experienced is Anatma. Atma is the Subject and not the object. Every photo proves the existence of the camera although the camera is not visible in any picture.
5. Atma is Akarta and Abhokta. Atma does not do anything; as such it does not reap the results of any action. It is neither the Doer nor Enjoyer.

Atma is Nirvikaraha, meaning, free from all modifications of existence such as birth, growth, change, decay and death.

Sri Krishna asks Arjuna to recognize and claim this Atma as himself. Body and mind are incidental instruments, a gift from God. During sleep they are taken away temporarily. Later it will be taken away permanently. Knowing this truth claim the Atma as myself, says Sri Krishna. This is the permanent remedy to all life's problems.

Shloka 39-58: Karma Yoga:

Atma is the subtlest and most difficult topic to comprehend unless one has a prepared mind. Sri Krishna wants to help people who have difficulty grasping Gyana Yoga. To them he recommends getting Gyana Yogyata through Karma Yoga. Swamiji compares it to a tutorial class. Essence of Karma Yoga is:

Proper Action+Proper Attitude=Karma Yoga

Proper action: Actions are of three types. Satvic, Rajasic and Tamasic.

Satvic action is considered the best type of action. It is an action where beneficiaries are more. This is Nishkama Karma. In performing such an action I take into account my family, village, society, world and environment. It is self less action.

Rajasic action is selfish action. I do not bother about society or world. The attitude that God will take care of it (when somebody is helpless) also comes in and it is thus fatalistic as well.

Tamasic action is when I benefit at the cost of others or society even causing harm in this process. It is a very selfish approach to action.

Proper Attitude: Whatever action I perform I should do it with love and sincerity, otherwise it is an insult to that action. Enjoy what you do. Learn to love the action. Even actions we do not like, we can learn to love them. Even the most menial action, do it well without worry for appreciation or reward. If I am doing it, I should do it properly. Do it as an offering to God. Every action, perform it as Ishwara Arpanam. Whatever be the consequences of my action (good or bad) take it as a prasada. This is karma Yoga.

Discussing benefits of Karma Yoga, Sri Krishna, says it is not a means for liberation. It, however, gives Gyana Yoga Yogyata Prapthihi. It gives the seeker the Sadhana Chatusthaya Sampathihi.

Shloka 54-72: Describes the Sthita Pragyaha.

He is one who has gone through Karma Yoga and Gyana Yoga. He is one who knows he is the Atma. He has assimilated the knowledge and converted it to emotional strength. Pragyaha is one who has the intellectual knowledge. Sthitha Pragyaha is one who has converted the knowledge to emotional strength. Sri Krishna discusses the following two topics related to Sthitha Pragyaha.

1. How to become a Sthitha Pragyaha or Sthitha Pragyaha Lakshanani and
2. How to convert this knowledge to emotional strength or Sthitha Pragyaha Sadhanani

By Sravanam and Mananam with the help of a Guru one can convert the Agyaha to Pragyaha. Now the pupil has to work at converting from Pragyaha to Sthitha Pragyaha. Here Guru cannot help; it is a lonely journey.

So how does one convert the knowledge to emotional strength? What are the tools or Sadhanani available?

The three mental exercises, Sadhanani, prescribed by Sri Krishna are:

1. Indriya Nigraha: Mastering the senses. Without this you have no control on what enters your mind. Without it your mind will be disturbed and cannot assimilate the teaching. Swamiji clarifies that suppression of senses is not a tool to be used.
2. Mano Nigraha: Thought discipline. Many thoughts just come into us without asking and we have no control on them. Even with sense control thoughts do get in. Sri Krishna says, do not worry about arrival of thoughts, but once it comes in do not perpetuate them. Curb them at their source, especially the unhealthy one's.
3. Nidhidhyasanam: Dwelling on the teaching. Reading, listening, sharing the teaching with others are methods of Nidhidhyasanam. Through this process the teaching gets assimilated. Thus, one becomes a Sthitha Pragyaha.

Sthitha Pragyaha Lakshanani: What are the traits of a Sthitha Pragyaha? They are:

1. Freedom from binding desires. I have only preferences, I can also do without them. I am also accepting of success

or failure. All bindings are gone. Non-binding desires are harmless. and this is because of my self-sufficiency also known as purnatvam. I do not miss anything in life.

2. The second important trait of this assimilation is Samatvam or equanimity of mind, which means freedom from ragaha, bhayaha, krodhaha, etc. The turbulences caused by anger, fear, jealousy do not come to me.

Sri Krishna gives the example the ocean. Just as the ocean is ever full, irrespective of rain and irrespective of rivers merging into the ocean, so also is the Gyani. Therefore, purnatvam and samatvam are the main traits of a Sthita Pragyaha. And Sri Krishna concludes the chapter by saying that this Sthitha Pragyaha is a free bird, both in life and in death. Wherever he goes he never faces any conflict. He enjoys freedom while living; he enjoys freedom after death, both as jivan muktih and videha mukthi.

With best wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy