

Is Life Predetermined?

Many events of our life are out of our control and most of our life appears to be predetermined. It appears that we may be able to influence only a small portion of our life. Our birth is destined. Our death is destined. And most of our life appears destined. Then, is it correct to say that our life is destined and we can do nothing to change our destiny?

I had the privilege of meeting the Swami Paramarthananda in August 2016 and at that time I presented this question to him.

Before I present the answer from the Swamiji, some discussions regarding the laws of karma. Karmas can be classified, based on their occurrence, into three types:

1. **Sanjitha Karma:** Sanjitha karma is the sum total of all karma accumulated from our previous jenmas (lives). Sanjitha karmas will mature over many jenmas (births/lives).
2. **Agami Karma:** Agami Karmas are generated by our actions in this life. Some agami karma will mature in this life and some will become sanjitha karma for maturity in later lives.
3. **Prarabtha Karma:** Prarabtha karma is the karma maturing or fructifying in this life. Maturing karma could be either from this life or from previous lives.

Some of the laws of karma:

1. Some of the prarabtha karma are from this life and others are from previous lives. Maturity or fructifications of Karmas is not linear. This is similar to seeds of plants – some seeds sprout quickly while others take longer.
2. Karma includes both punyam (positive karmas) and pavam (negative karmas). Punyams are the result of our dharmic actions and pavams are the result of our

adharmic actions.

3. While I do not control what has happened in my prior lives (sanjitha karma) or what is happening in this life (prarabtha karma), I can control how I react to my current situation (agami karma). A dharmic and purposeful life can increase punyam or decrease pavam.
4. All karmas – sanjitha, prarabtha and agami karmas- are the results of my actions in this life and previous lives. I did have control over any and all of my actions of my previous lives. I do have control over any and all of my actions in this life. I and I alone created all of my karmas. While my adharmic choices in the past have resulted in current unfavorable situations, I should make dharmic choices here and now. I can't change the choices I have made in the past, but I do have the free will to make the correct choices now.
5. When prarabtha karma for this life is exhausted, the body falls.
6. When sanjitha karma is exhausted, we get moksha or liberated.

Swamiji stated that some of the prarabtha karma are parapalam and some are dhurpalam, that is they are weak and controllable or strong and non controllable. However, we do not know which ones we can control and which ones we can not control. So we must always exercise our free will and make dharmic choices. We may also be able to reduce the impact of the controllable prarabtha karma by doing prayachitham (remedial measures). Prayachithams are of two types:

1. Lowkika prayachitham: These are worldly activities we can perform. Example of a lowkika prayachitham is going to a doctor when getting ill.
2. Sasthrika prayachitham: These are the rituals mentioned in scriptures. If these rituals are performed as described in the scriptures, the impact of prarabtha

karma can be reduced or eliminated.

When we face any adverse situation we should always do our dharmic duty and take proper prayachitham – either lowkika prayahitham or sasthrika pryachitham. For example, when one gets seriously ill, one should seek the treatment from a doctor. Refusing to follow medical advice and accepting the medical condition as our destiny is fatalism. Our scriptures do not allow fatalism and fatalism is fundamentally against the duties of a human being. Bagawan Krishna has emphasized this many times in Bagawat Geeta.

In conclusion, we always have free will and that free will gives us control over Agami Karma. A dharmic life can reduce agami karma pavam. We can also do some prayaschitham for prarabtha Karma to mitigate a negative phalam.

Notes:

- This post is based on my meeting with Swamiji in August 2016 as well many of his classes, specifically his classes in Tatva Bodha and his class number 148 – Chapter 10, Verse 33 of Bagawat Gita. I also recommend the readers to listen to those classes and get their own perspective (this post is from my perspective).
- I thank Ram Ramaswamy for framing this question in logical way. Many parts of this post are borrowed from his original question, which is reproduced below:

To exhaust Prarabhda karma one gets rebirth. This is destiny. While living, one experiences prarabhdha karma phalam, this too is destiny. Once Prarabhda Karma is exhausted for this lifetime, the body falls. This is also destiny.

Agami Karma's are new karmas generated by our actions in this lifetime. Some Agami Karma phalam will occur in this lifetime itself. Others will become Sanchitha Karma that will come back in a later life.

We do have some control on Agami Karma or so it appears. A purposeful life can reduce agami karma. We can also do some Prayaschitham for Prarabhda Karma as well to mitigate a negative phalam.

Looks like there is an only a small portion that we can influence. Most of our life appears destined. Our birth is destined. Our death is destined. Some parts of our life are also destined; we just do not know which part.

Is it then correct to say that based upon the part (Small) we do not control, our life is not destined? Even Ramana Maharishi told his mother: What has to happen will happen. What should not happen will not happen, however much we try. Is this not destiny?

Bagawat Geeta, Class 37

Greetings All,

Shloka # 6:

कर्मणो भवति विद्वान् कर्मणो भवति विद्वान्
कर्मणो भवति विद्वान् कर्मणो भवति विद्वान्
कर्मणो भवति विद्वान् कर्मणो भवति विद्वान्
कर्मणो भवति विद्वान् कर्मणो भवति विद्वान् 3.6

“ 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

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 moksha 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 Grihasthashrama 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 नान्तरात्फलं प्रीतिं च तदात्मनो
कर्मणो यो नान्तरात्फलं प्रीतिं च तदात्मनो
कर्मणो यो नान्तरात्फलं प्रीतिं च तदात्मनो
कर्मणो यो नान्तरात्फलं प्रीतिं च तदात्मनो 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 Paramarthananada 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 us 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
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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) Pravriti Marga and
- 2) Nivritimarga

Pravriti marga is Grihastashrama and Nivriti 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, mohaḥ, 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 parayaṇam 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 scared 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.

Nivrithi: 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 bhasyam, 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 Poorvamimasaka'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 Vyavahrika 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

Value

“Value is a value only when the value is valued by you” –
Dayananda Saraswathi

Swamiji in Bagawat Geeta, Class 35

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

Upadesa Saram by D. M . Sastri

Use this PDF document to follow swamiji's classes on Upadesa Saram. MaharshiUpadesaSaram

Kaivalya Upanshad, 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 Shantipatha seeks to make the mind, body and thought capable of obtaining knowledge. Vigna- nivrithihi 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