

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. Shashtra'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 सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनाः

सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः

सर्वे भद्राणि पाश्यन्तु

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनाः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः

ॐ सर्वे भद्राणि पाश्यन्तु

Om, Sarve bhavantu sukhinah

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