

Omkaara Upasana

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

omkaara upasana

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 13

Greetings All,

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

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

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

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

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

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad, Swami Paramarthananda said we have completed the first four upasanas of chapter # 1. They are Samshito Upasana, Vyahriti Upasana,

Hiranyagrabha upasana and Pankta Upasana. Now in anuvaka # 8, the fifth and final upasana of this chapter known as Omkara upasana is introduced.

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

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

When there are so many scared words in Scriptures why choose Omkara? Omkara is a most sacred and unique mantra. We have seen before in Shikshavalli's anuvaka # 5 that Brahmaji extracted Omkara from Vedas. Therefore, Omkara chanting is equal to chanting all Vedic mantras. Thus, we get the Omkara mahima. Any word in scripture can refer to a particular object. Thus, when we say chair it means only “chair” and not a table. So it is also with the name Rama or Krishna. Thus, words have limitations. They don't represent the totality of Brahman. To describe God, a word describing all objects in cosmos should be used. One word should represent all objects of creation. OM is such a word. Om encompasses all objects of creation Thus:

A: All Sthula objects

U: All Sukshma objects.

M: All Karana objects.

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

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

How is it important in rituals?

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Sama Veda priest is called Udgata and his assistants are

called Udgataganaha. They also total four.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

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

Shloka # 2:

ॐ तस्मै श्रीकृष्णाय नमः ॥ श्रीकृष्ण उवाच ॥
ॐ तस्मै श्रीकृष्णाय नमः ॥ श्रीकृष्ण उवाच ॥ ६.२ ॥

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

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

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

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

How to stop such disturbances from occurring in the mind?

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

We can say: Grihasthashrama=Karma Yoga=Samatvam.

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

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

In the second shloka he justifies why he calls a Grihastha a real Sanyasi. The Grihastha has after all not renounced anything. He has all kinds of possessions (house, money, land..), family etc. How can such a person be a Sanyasi? What makes him a Sanyasi?

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

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

not worry, hence he is a Sankalpa Sanyasi.

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

Shloka # 3:

कर्मयोगोऽसौ योगो ज्ञानयोगोऽसौ योगो
कर्मयोगोऽसौ योगो ज्ञानयोगोऽसौ योगो 6.3

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

How long should one follow karma Yoga? Is it an end or is it an intermediate step? Karma Yoga is not an ultimate sadhana. It only makes you Gyana Yogyata Prapthihi. It purifies the mind. Limitation of Karma Yoga is it cannot give liberation.

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

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

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

Without studying scriptures the only meditation recommended is Nama japam.

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

1. Taking to Sanyasashrama or Sanyasavidhi, a formal process. Just as the sacred thread ceremony is used for initiation, this process is used for withdrawal from life. Sanyasavidhi's goal is to get out of rituals and start the process of self-enquiry.
2. There is another form of withdrawal in which a person reduces the amount of activity remaining in grihastha ashrama itself. So, if he was doing rituals for many hours he now reduces the duration. Even mundane activities, he reduces, handing them over to someone else. This requires detachment. Thus, this is also a kind of a vanaprastha ash

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

Shloka # 4:

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

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

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

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

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

Security never depends on external conditions. It is an internal state of mind. Even possession of wealth can cause insecurity. So, better surrender to Lord. Such a person

reality, is only one of the factors. The other factor is our own free will or self-effort.

2. A mature mind is free from obsession of sense pleasures. Here the emphasis is on obsession. If you don't get what you want, you should not be
3. One who drops worry of the future is a Sankalpa Sanyasi. Worry is not deliberate. It is a reaction or obsession that happens at any time.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy

Tatireya Upanishads, Class 12

Greetings All,

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 6, Shloka # 1:

Here in this space within the heart resides the intelligent, imperishable, effulgent "Purusa" or "Entity". Between the palates, that which hangs like a nipple (the uvula), that is the birthplace of Indira, where the root of hair is made to part, opening the skull in the center.

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad, Swami Paramarthananda said we are concluding this anuvaka six. In this anuvaka we were getting the details of the Hiranyagarbha Upasana. Hiranyagarbha represents Samashti Sukshma Sharira Chaitanyam. Hiranayagarbha has two main organs and they are Prana and Mind. Very often Hiranyagarbha is represented as the

Total Mind or Total Prana. It is then called Ahamgraha.

In this upasana god is visualized on myself. The Upanishad says this upasana bestows two phalams. They are:

- If performed as nishkama karma then spiritual growth occurs. Through this upasana purity, focus and expansion of mind occurs.
- If performed as sakama karma one obtains Brahma Loka. This, however, occurs only after death.

How is Brahma Loka reached? Jiva at death withdraws into Hridayam. From there, via Shukla Gathi (Indra Yoni), a bright path, Jiva travels through Sushumna Nadi and then through the head (Brahma Randhra). It continues through the solar disc to Brahma Loka.

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 6, Shloka # 2:

With the word Bhu, he stands in fire; in the air in the shape of Bhuvaha; as Suvaha in the sun; in the Brahman as Mahaha. He obtains self-effulgence. He obtains Lordship over minds. He becomes the Lord of speech, lord of the eyes, lord of the ears and lord of knowledge. Then he becomes this Brahman whose body is space, whose nature is truth, who sports in dynamic life Prana, whose mind is bliss, who is full of peace, who is immortal. Thus, Oh descendant of the ancient yoga culture, meditate.

This shloka tells us what happens to a Hiranyagarbha Upasaka after death. The Upasaka has practiced Hiranyagarbha upasana with Vyahrithi upasana. Both are performed together. Thus, the upasaka has performed Hiranyagarbha upasana as well as upasana of other Devatas. All devatas (anga's) are a part of Hiranyagarbha, the total, also known as Angi. He will become one with all devatas as well. In this process at the merger first occurs with anga devatas and later with angi devata as well.

Thus, first merger is of the seeker as Bhu with Agni, then of seeker as Bhuvah with Vayu, then of seeker as Suvaha with Surya, then of seeker as Mahaha with Hiranyagarbha. Brahman in the shloka means Saguna Hiranyagarbha.

After merger, the sadhaka attains sovereignty over 14 Lokas, as Brahma Loka is the highest Loka. He is now lord of all individual minds. He is also lord of speech and karmendriyas (speech, eyes, ears, tongue and knowledge). Varuna Devata presides over speech. Additionally, Hiranyagarbha has akasha; as such he has lordship over space as well. Since Hiranyagarbha is shown as saguna Brahman, his body consists of both visible and invisible bodies (sthula and sukshma shariras).

In shloka Sat means visible universe. Prana-ramam means Total Prana. Hiranyagarbha also controls Total Prana. Thus, Sadhaka enjoys the ananda through every mind. Why does he not get dukha is a question that can come up. Hiranyagarbha is total punyam hence he gets only sukham. Hiranayagarbha is also total peace and prosperity. Such a Hiranyagarbha the Sadhaka obtains through this upsana.

In Shloka, the words Prachin Prayoga means: O student you who are eligible to receive this ancient wisdom.

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 7, Shloka # 1:

The earth, the sky, the interspace (antariksham), the heaven, the main quarters, the intermediate quarters; the fire, the air, the sun, the moon and the stars; the waters, the herbs, the forest trees, the space and Atman, so far regarding all living creatures and then come regarding the Soul (adhyatmam), the prana, the vyana, the apana, the udana and the samana; the eyes, the ears, the mind, the speech and the touch; the skin, the flesh, the muscles, the bones and the marrow. After analyzing and determining these, the seer said, "All this is panktam or five fold or pentadic. The one set of five fold

grouping sustains the other pentadic grouping.”

With previous shloka anuvakaha 6 is complete. With this, the three upasanas of Samshito, Vyahrithi and Hiranyagarbha are all complete. This section deals with a fourth upasana called Pankta Brahma Upasana. Here too the upasana is taking us to Jivatma paramatma aikyam. Here again we are practicing the visualization of macrocosm in the microcosm.

This creation (macro) is divided into three groups. Each is called Panktam or Pankta-trayam. Why call it panktam? Panktam means group of five numbers. Thus, here we have 3 groups with five members in each adding up a total of 15 members. These 15 members constitute the creation.

Individual creation (micro) is also divided into three groups. Here too each group has five members and thus total of 15 members are present at the micro level as well.

In this upasana, Samashti Pankta-Trayam (macro) are visualized on Vyashti Pankta Trayam (micro).

This is the reason it is called Pankta Brahma Upasana.

The members of each group are now listed.

At macro or samashti level:

1. Loka Panktam consisting of: Earth, interspace, heaven, four directions (NSEW) and four intermediary directions (such as NE, SW etc)
2. Dev Panktam consisting of: Fire, Air, Sun, Moon and Stars.
3. Bhuta Panktam consisting of: Water, Herbs (small plants), Trees, Space and Virat. In the shloka atma means everything else mentioned in creation or Virat.

At the micro or Vyashti level:

1. Vayu panktam consisting of: Prana, Vyana, Apana, Udhana

and Samana.

2. Indriya Panktam consisting of: Eyes, Ears, Mind, speech and organ of touch.
3. Dhatu Panktam consisting of: Skin, flesh, muscle, bone and marrow.

Thus, we have total six panktams.

A Vedic rishi prescribed these six panktams. The whole creation is nothing other than these panktams. So visualize Samashti panktam via Vyashti Panktams. Through this visualization of totality, one gets strengthened. Just as an individual gets courage through family, or a family gets courage from their tribe, you too strengthen your self by invoking God in You.

This upasana is called pankta upasana. It can also be performed either as Nishkama karma or Sakama karma. When performed as nishkama upasana one gets chitta shuddhi. When performed as sakama karma upasana one gets Brahma loka.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

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

Greetings All,

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

Thus, meditation has two roles. The roles are:

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

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

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

Gyana Yoga: is consistent and systematic study of the scriptures for a length of time, under the guidance of a competent acharya and this study alone gives self-knowledge. If one does not get knowledge through scriptures there is no other way to obtain this knowledge. Scriptural study is the only means of knowledge.

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

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

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

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

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

The first meditation is called upasanam. The second meditation is called nidhidhyasanam. The sixth chapter of the Gita is focusing on nidhidhyasanam, which I translate as Vedantic meditation. The sixth chapter is nidhidhyasana yoga or Vedantic meditation. This chapter can be divided into five main topics. They are:

1. General preparation for meditation or called Bahiranga sadhana. These are disciplines that have to be observed throughout the transaction. These are meant for day-to-day transactions or Samanya sadhanani.

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

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

General preparation for meditation:

Why have this preparation? We have only one mind for our day-to-day transactions and meditation. In our daily transactions we go through all kinds of experiences. Before meditation one must free one self from all these experiences and meditate with a fresh mind. The daily transactions leave strong impressions on us that affect meditation. Violent emotional disturbances adversely impact meditation. Both the winner and loser of Wimbledon cannot get sleep. One should learn the art of keeping a balanced mind. This does not mean an emotionless mind. An emotionless mind is like a wall. Rather it is a mind without violent upheavals. So, one has to keep a balanced mind or Samatvam and not get carried away by joys and sorrows. I should have mental mastery. It is one of the pre-conditions of meditation.

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

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

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

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

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

Shloka # 2:

ॐ ऋषिर्गणेशाय नमः ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ 6.2 ॥

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

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

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

Now worrying about future is different from planning for future. Planning is a deliberate action. Worrying, however, is impulsive and can happen at any time. While planning is acceptable worrying is an obstacle. Worrying makes one inefficient. **One who does not worry is a Sanyasi.**

Take Away:

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

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy

Upasanas in Shikshavalli

Shishavalli of Taitreya Upanishad enumerates the following vedic upasanas:

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

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

Upasanas in Sikshavallie

Bhagawat Geeta, Class 80, Chapter 6

Greetings All,

Continuing his teaching of Gita and having completed chapter 5, Swami Paramarthananda started chapter 6 today. This chapter is titled Dhyana yoga or Gyana Samyama yoga. This chapter will deal with dhyanam, a very important spiritual sadhana.

Before going into the text proper let us get some basic ideas regarding meditation as given in the Upanishads. We should remember that the Bhagavat Gita is based upon the Upanishads alone; it is not an independent text. Therefore, we should clearly understand the role of meditation in spiritual sadhana. Before knowing the role or purpose of meditation we need to understand what meditation is not meant for. There are many ideas and misconceptions regarding the role of meditation. Therefore, let us first see what it is not meant for.

There are three things meditation is not meant for. They are:

1. It is not a means for liberation. According to Upanishads, liberation is not a goal rather Liberation is our own intrinsic nature. It is a siddha vasthu. It is however, not a sadhyam. It is just a matter of us owning up to it. Knowledge alone can liberate. Knowledge reveals that liberation is already an accomplished truth. Nowhere is it said that meditation is a means of liberation.
2. Meditation is not prescribed for knowledge as well. It is not a means of knowledge. In scriptures six means of knowledge have been discussed and they are known as Shat pramanas. They are: Pratyaksha, anumana, upamana, arthapatti, aupalabdhi, and shastram. Meditation is not

mentioned as a pramanam. It is not a means for material or spiritual knowledge.

For a spiritual seeker meditation is also not prescribed for mystic or extraordinary experiences. All experiences ordinary, extraordinary and mystic all deal with the finite realms of time with a beginning and an end. They deal with the objective universe. Ordinary experiences deal with ordinary objective experience while mystic experiences deal with mystic-objective experiences. However, the Experiencer, the subject of the experience can never be an object of any experience. Swamiji added that he is not questioning the possibility of mystic or extraordinary experiences. They, however, cannot deal with the Subject, the experiencer. Thus, they all fall under objective knowledge and are not under Self- Knowledge. Thus, they are incapable of giving liberation. Therefore, the seeker should not run after mystical experiences. In those experiences he will only continue to be in the objective world or in anatma or remain a Samsari.

For a spiritual seeker meditation is not prescribed for mystic experiences. Gaudapada, Shankaracharya's guru's guru, says one should reject them even if they come to you. Gaudapadacharya says, ask the question: is this an object or is this a subject? And the very fact that the experience arrived, you had the experience and the experience departed, indicates that it belongs to the objective field. The Experiencer does not arrive or depart. Self is the subject behind all experiences. So, seeker should be interested in the Self.

If meditation is not meant for above three then what is it meant for? Meditation has two roles.

The preparation of mind for spiritual knowledge or Gyanayogyata praptihi. It is like preparation of land for sowing the seed. This is preparatory meditation. There are other preparatory exercises for the mind as well. Preparatory meditation is called upasana dhyanam for knowledge. It can be

compared to washing the plate, washing one's hands etc., in preparation for eating.

Following that we still have to gain spiritual knowledge through pramanam. My eyes can see everything but they can't see themselves. The Seer can't be seen. For this one needs a mirror. Thus, when the knower has to be known, the scriptures prescribe mirrors of Upadesha pramanam, Shabda pramanam and Shastra pramanam. However, they need to be available and need to be used appropriately. How to use the mirror? To learn to use the mirror properly, one has to go through sravanam and mananam also known as Vedanta vichara.

Sravanam: It is the systematic and consistent study of vedantic scriptures for a length of time under a competent acharya. This will produce Self-knowledge. Now, through sravanam, as I obtain this knowledge, doubts will arise. Vedanta's teachings, when not fully understood, are very difficult to believe for a layperson. Vedanta says: You are the Seeker you are seeking. It says, You alone are the truth. Thus, per Vedanta, the Seer is the truth and not the Seen. These unbelievable declarations of Vedanta raise doubts in our mind.

So when many questions come up, the instruction is not to ask the question immediately. One should listen to the teaching completely, receive all the important features of the teaching and until then keep your doubts aside or in modern parlance place them in a parking lot.

Listening is the most difficult task in the world, says Swamiji. Furthermore, Knowledge received is weakened by ongoing doubts. Why should I believe this knowledge, is a question that can come up? It is called Samshayasahita Gyanam or knowledge with doubts. Doubtful knowledge is not knowledge, it is still ignorance. Citing an example, imagine a live electric wire. Just as you are about to touch it, someone says I am 99% sure it is not live. Will you still touch it?

Probably not, as the 1% that you do not know can be fatal. Hence, it cannot be considered as knowledge.

Mananam: This second stage is meant to remove doubts or samshaya nivriti. During mananam, I try to answer my own questions. I ask other co-students to clarify my doubts. Thus, discussions may remove some doubts. Lastly, the Guru is always available to answer any questions. Vedantic books may also remove some of our doubts. Thus, mananam converts the knowledge into conviction or makes it Dridha Gyanam. Now, knowledge is the job of intellect. Upanishads say Intellect alone can get knowledge. The word Chetaha means intellect. The knowledge " I am the sub-stratum of this creation" must come into me.

In this context Swami Chinmayananda told us a story. A man felt he was a worm. He had a phobia. As a treatment, he was shown a mirror and a worm. When he was a worm, he used to be scared about birds. So he kept away from birds. After treatment, he came out, saw a bird and ran. When asked why he was running away, he asked, does the bird know I am a human being now? My conviction should not be dependent on what others think of me. "I am that Brahman from which the whole world arises; and in whom the whole world rests and to whom the whole world resolves; that Brahman I am." This is called Self-knowledge. And how do you obtain it? You obtain Self-knowledge through shravanam and mananam. What do you obtain from this process? One gets dridha gyanam or nis-samshaya gyanam.

Starting with upsana meditation, then through sravanam and mananam we obtain clear knowledge. This knowledge alone can give liberation. It is a total transformation of life. Liberation is freedom from ragah, dveshah; kamah, krodhah; lobhah, mohah; and madah, matsaryah. It is also freedom from all internal problems, irrespective of external situations.

The mind is freed from problems and this transformation can be

called jivan mukthih or it can be called saintliness. The person attains sainthood.

How to define saintliness? He is one who is incapable of getting hurt by external situations. He is also incapable of hurting other people. Simply stated, he does not hurt others and he is not hurt by external situations. This is jivan mukti.

This knowledge has to produce jivan mukti. In the normal course, this conviction should give me liberation but often in spite of the conviction my mind does not enjoy the benefit of knowledge. I seem to continue to be as bitter as before; as jealous as before; as frustrated as before; as afraid as before and as samsari as before. Why is this so? Why has the transformation not taken place in me? What is the obstacle?

Citing an example, there is water in a tank. The tap is open but water does not flow. Why? The reason is there is an obstruction in the tap. So, one has to remove the obstacle. This happens with knowledge as well. We need to remove obstacle (s) to knowledge. So, pay attention to psychological personality, examine your mind. Mind has habitual notions, strongly ingrained called Viparit Bhavana. They are in our deep subconscious mind. Different people have different problems. Citing an example, in a family there are two children. One gets good grades while other does not. The child with good grades is always praised. Even if nothing was said to the other child, he feels neglected and his feelings will likely reappear in future as well. This will cause anger and frustration. Therefore, Viparit Bhavana has to be removed. Removal of Viparit Bhavana is called Nidhidhyasanam. Here the transformation occurs.

The first type of meditation was called upasana dhyanam; which comes before shraavanam and mananam; then we have to get into the second type of exercise called nidhidhyasanam in which alone, the transformation of the personality has to take

place; and nidhidhyasanam consists of two exercises. They are:

Alert Living:

It requires an alert living. One should lead a Vedanta friendly life. All my transactions are Vedanta friendly as well. Vedanta friendly living means I live the Vedantic teachings. Whenever I don't have peace of mind that is Vedanta unfriendly. Vedanta tells peace is not something far away for you to go and acquire. Peace is your own nature. In fact, if peace is not here, it is never in any place else. Therefore, I change the way I live to ensure no thought or transaction is against vedantic teaching. This is called alert living.

Meditation:

Second part of nidhidhyasanam is meditation in which I exclusively spend some time for revising my opinion about myself. Until I came to Vedanta, my opinion about myself was very poor. I felt: I am mortal; I am useless; etc. Even my family reminded me constantly of this. Society too made me feel small.

This state of low self-esteem is samsara

Now, I revise my opinion about myself. " I" am the consciousness, blessing the mortal body; and "I" the consciousness, am immortal. Similarly, when I feel I need the world to be happy and complete; I meditate on the fact that I do not need the world; rather it is the world that depends on me.

Thus, for every unhealthy self-opinion, I neutralize it with the opposite. This is called atma dhyanam or self-meditation. It should go deep into my sub-conscious that even in dream; I should see myself as a wonderful free beautiful and healthy being. This is meditation No.2.

Take Away:

1. "I am that Brahman from which the whole world arises; and

in whom the whole world rests and to whom the whole world resolves; that Brahman I am.” This is called self-knowledge.

2. How to define saintliness? He is one who is incapable of getting hurt by external situations. He is also in capable of hurting other people. Simply stated, he does not hurt others and he is not hurt by external situations.

3. Nidhidhyasanam has two parts they are:

- I change the way I live to ensure no thought or transaction is against Vedantic teaching. This is called alert living.
- For every unhealthy self-opinion, I neutralize it with the opposite. This is called atma dhyanam or self-meditation. With Best Wishes Ram Ramaswamy

Baghawat Geeta, Class 79 – Chapter 5 Summary

Gita, Class # 79, Ch 5, 7/15/17:

Continuing his teaching of Gita and concluding chapter five Swami Paramarthananda summarized the chapter today.

Sri Krishna has given us the entire teaching of the Gita in chapters 2, 3 and 4 respectively. Chapter 5 is a summary of all the previous three chapters and in a sense it gives us the very essence of the Gita and the Vedas. This chapter can be classified into following four parts.

- Nishta Dvayam or two types of life styles.
- Sadhana Dvayam or two types of spiritual disciplines.
- Sadhana phalam or benefits of these sadhanas.
- Introduction to meditation as foundation for chapter

six.

The Nishta- dvayam are: 1) Grihasthashrama, and 2) Sanyasashrama. In grihasthashrama one has possessions and is part of society while in Sanyasahrama one has no possessions nor is one a part of society. Grihasthashrama is called Pravrithimarga, an active life, and Sanyasashrama is called Nivrithimarga, a secluded life.

The other two ashramas, Brahmacharya and Vana-prastha, are preparations for these two lifestyles. Thus brahmacharya is a preparation for grihasthashrama. vanaprastha is a preparation for sanyasashrama. These ashramas are called nishtas. The two lifestyles have been prescribed by the Vedas.

In chapter five, Arjuna starts off the chapter saying he is confused about Sanyasa. He wants to know if Sanyasa is a requirement for liberation. Answering him, Sri Krishna says that Sanyasa is not compulsory. Any one of the two life styles can be chosen. Thus, we have a choice with respect to ashrama or lifestyle. One has to decide if one wants to be a monk or get married. There are advantages and disadvantages to both lifestyles. In Grihasthashrama the advantage is that one has wealth and supportive people. This gives him a feeling (real or unreal) of security. Sanyasi does not have wealth nor people and thus no security as well.

The disadvantage in grihasthashrama is that one has a lot of responsibility that can be burdensome. Sanyasi does not have this responsibility. In life, whenever a choice is involved, conflict always comes in.

Sri Krishna tells Arjuna that the Grihasthashrama is more suitable for him. He says this ashrama is suitable for most of the people. Human relationship is very important in maintaining mental sanity. Thus, both ashramas are acceptable. However, only a prepared person should consider taking up sanyasashrama. Shloka 1 through # 6 discusses this topic of

lifestyle.

2) **Sadhana Dvayam**: They are Karma yoga sadhana and Gyana yoga sadhana. Both sadhanas are required to be followed. Sri Krishna says there is no choice between the sadhanas.

Swamiji says there is a very big misconception in this area that there are several paths to liberation. Thus, some people feel karma yoga alone will lead to moksha while others feel bhakti yoga alone will lead to moksha. Others think raja yoga will get them moksha while still others think kundalini yoga will also get them moksha.

He clarified that neither the Vedas nor Gita supports this point of view.

Everybody has to go through Karma yoga followed by Gyana yoga. They should be performed, in sequence, one after the other, that too gradually. Karma Yoga has to be learnt and adopted first, as it is a required preparation for Gyana yoga. Then, through Gyana yoga, one obtains liberation. This is the Vaidic margaha. Thus, in first phase, karma yoga is dominant while in second phase Gyana yoga is dominant.

Karma Yoga: Shlokas # 7 through 12 deals with karma yoga. Chapter # 3 also discussed karma yoga at great length. **Karma Yoga can be defined as Proper action performed with a Proper attitude.**

Proper action: Proper action can be graded based on the spiritual progress that it can provide. In this gradation, selfless actions come on top, as most people are benefited by such actions. Nishkama karmani also called satvika karmani are the best kind of actions that contribute to the maximum purity and spiritual progress.

Therefore, a karma yogi should give utmost importance to satvika karmani and then to rajasa karmani and lastly to tamasa karmas. Performance of Tamas karmani should be

negligible or none at all. This is called proper action.

Sakama karma is action that leads to benefits for one-self. They are Rajasic in nature and provide least benefit spiritually.

Tamasic karmani are actions that are harmful to society. Here I get the benefit but society is injured. They pull down a person spiritually.

Therefore, in karma yoga, our focus should be on actions that are Satvic in nature.

Proper Attitude: Here I perform all actions as worship to God. All my actions (satvic, tamasic and rajasic) are dedicated to God. And then, whatever the consequences of my action, I accept it as a prasadam. This is the proper attitude.

Citing an example, swamiji says, even thieves in India were devotees. They prayed to God before going on a theft. Even their mind changes with time through association with God. Shankaracharya says even a nishidha karma should be performed as an offering to God.

Every experience in life is a result of my own actions. What have I done for this great suffering, when I have not done any great wrong, is a question that comes to our mind. Remember our experiences include ones from our previous lives as well. Whatever I get, I deserve. Don't ask, "why me", at all. Rather ask, O God, give me the strength to go through this and learn. This attitude called padmapatram iva ambasa and has been defined in chapter 5, shloka # 10. This is proper action with the proper attitude.

And what will happen as a result of karma yoga? The result is that the mind becomes oriented towards the spirit, materialistic tendencies weaken, spiritual tendencies strengthen and interest in Gita increases. With this interest in the shastra also increases.

Thus, everyone has to go through purifying actions. Even a Sanyasi has to go through them. While the type of actions may differ, between a Sanyasi and a Grihastha, both have to go through karma yoga.

Gyana Yoga Sadhana: Shlokas # 13 through 21 deals with this topic. Gyana yoga is a requirement for moksha. Many consider Gyana yoga a dry path while they consider Bhakti yoga as a wet path. It is considered a wet path as you shed tears in a state of bhakti. Swamiji says this again is a misconception. Chapter # 7 discusses Bhakti yoga.

So, what is Gyana yoga? It is Vedanta vichara consisting of sravanam, mananam and nidhidhyasanam. It consists of the systematic, consistent and continuous study of scriptures under a competent acharya. Jumping from one Guru to another is not recommended as each Guru will have a different way of communication.

What will such a study lead to? This study will lead to the recognition of atma, the real nature of every individual. This study will lead to the recognition of atma, which is the real nature, the essential nature, the core nature and the higher nature of the individual.

What is the nature of this discovery or the nature of atma?

We have studied this elaborately in the Chapter 2.

Krishna hints at it here again as follows. The atma is of the nature of consciousness. What is the nature of consciousness? Important features of consciousness include:

- Consciousness is not a part, property or product of the body.
- Consciousness is an independent entity that pervades and enlivens the body.
- Consciousness is not limited by the boundaries of the body. In short, it is all pervading.

- Consciousness survives or continues to exist even after the fall of the body.
- Consciousness is the only one, that pervades all the bodies of the creation, which means bodies are many, but the pervading consciousness is one.
- Consciousness being one and all pervading like space; it is free from all the actions.
- Consciousness is not only an akarta but also an abhokta as well.
- Consciousness is, thus, also free from all karmas. Therefore, it also does not have papam or punyam.

Citing an example, while all actions occur in space, space itself does not act. Similarly while light illumines, it does not act. So also with consciousness, it does not act.

The stages of Gyana yoga:

First stage is identification with this consciousness. Citing an example, when I ask you what is here you will say there is a hand. Even if I ask you 100 times you will still say it is only a hand. Then, when I tell you that this hand itself is seen because of a light principle that is pervading the hand only then you realize that the light alone is pervading. Consciousness is like the light. This is the teaching of the Upanishad.

Second stage is learning to identify with the consciousness as myself. At present we have learnt to identify with the body; and this learning is so intense and so ingrained in our mind; that the moment we use the word I, we remember, I am a male, I am a female, I am so many years old; I am the child of so and so. In fact, you remember all the bio-data associated with the body alone. So, therefore, we have to do a lot of unlearning. And the new process is learning to identify with the consciousness and instead of saying I-am-the-body I have to learn to say that I-am-the-consciousness-pervading-the-body. This body is subject to arrival and departure. This body

belongs to the material world. This body is a temporary gift from the Lord. I can use it for sometime, as a medium of transaction but I cannot hold on to it permanently. So, I have to learn to say that " I am the consciousness in the body" and not "I am the body". This is shifting the "I".

If I know I am consciousness, I will look at you as well as the consciousness of your body. Right now I only see your physical personality. I am atma, You are also atma. This unity of vision is possible only through unity of spiritual wisdom. All other talk of unity is only lip service. On one side we all say we are Indians, but we still fight and kill others. We can never have a true transformation without getting this wisdom.

With this knowledge the fear of mortality also goes. I realize that I am the immortal consciousness functioning through this body. Our problem is not with mortality of body, rather it is that I think " I" am mortal. This notion changes with Gyanam. I realize "I" am immortal. This leads to wisdom and poornatvam.

With this, Sri Krishna concludes the topic of gyana yoga, shlokas #13. to 21. Here karma yoga was the first stage and gyana yoga the second stage. Gyana yoga leads to the wisdom that I am full, that I am immortal and Aham poornah. This is freedom from limitation.

Benefits of Gyana Yoga :

Shloka 21 through 26 discusses benefits. One benefit is the development of the spiritual value known as Vairagyam. Vairagyam is independence from external factors for happiness. We normally tend to depend upon external factors for our happiness and this poses a big problem. External factors are not in my control. Most situations that we come across related to family, servant, children etc. are not in our control. Psychological dependence is sorrow. Physical dependence may be

difficult to avoid. The problem is with us and not with the world. The solution is to go from dependence to independence. Learn to depend upon your Self (higher self) for security, shanti and poornatvam. This attitude is called Vairagyam. This is dropping psychological dependence.

The benefits include: Jivan mukti. It means inner independence here and now. Regarding outer freedom, I am still bound by rules of society. Chapter # 2 discusses Sthitha Pragyaha Lakhanani. So this is jivan mukthi and he will live like that until the prarabdha karma is over. Until then the physical body will continue.

Therefore, as long as karma is there the body survives. Once the karma is gone, body also goes and thereafter he is one with Brahman, without any individuality. This stage is called videha mukthi and Sri Krishna calls it brahma nirvana.

With shlokas # 22 through # 26 the chapter five's main purpose is over.

In Shloka's 27-29 Sri Krishna introduces meditation.

The last three shloka are beeja shlokas. They are seed verses for the tree of 6th chapter, which is to come next.

This chapter, the sixth, is called sanyasa yogah or karma sanyasa yogah. Here Sri Krishna clarifies what is sanyasa to Arjuna. What is this clarification? That, the outer sanyasa is not important rather it is the inner sanyasa alone that is real. That external renunciation is not compulsory, however, inner renunciation is the real renunciation.

Take Away:

1. Karma Yoga can be defined as Proper action performed with a Proper attitude.
2. Every experience in life is a result of my own actions. What have I done for this great suffering is a wrong

beings rather being selfish. Through this life I should expand my mind to feel the pain of others as well. Only one who feels the pain of others will not hurt anybody.

Now why do I hurt others? I hurt others because I do not feel anything at all, because I am such a gross human being. I need to sensitize my mind so that I feel the emotions of others. **Psychologists call it the capacity of empathy. It is a fundamental quality that is required. It is the foundation for all other virtues of life. The entire human character is based on this one capacity. I should be able to sense the feelings of other people.** So when the other person is happy I am able to identify and share the happiness and similarly when the other person feels the pain; I should be able to appreciate that feeling and share it. This capacity of feeling others' feeling is called empathy and it is referred to here as sarvabhutahite ratatvam. In this process, initially, I feel the pain of my own family, my wife, my children etc. This itself expands the mind. It continues to expand. A shortsighted person does not sense even his wife's pain. A person with an expanded mind even feels the pain of animals and plants.

In Pathanjali's ashtanga yoga, the first value emphasized is ahimsa or not hurting others physically, verbally or even mentally. This is where our spirituality begins.

Shankaracharya in his commentary says such an evolved person does not hurt others; he is incapable of hurting others, because even as he hurts others, he can

immediately feel the pain of the other and therefore he withdraws from such an action. Thus, morality or ethics is the first stage, without which moksha is not possible and therefore Sri Krishna says sarvabhutahite ratatvam. Once I feel others' feelings I will spend my life in helping others.

Nishkama karma is natural to such a person with a sensitive

mind. Only a gross-minded person will ignore the fellow human being but a sensitive minded person would certainly help other people. He may not be able to help financially or physically but at a minimum he will at the least wish "Oh Lord, let everyone be happy".

By his Nishkama karma and pancha maha yagya, he becomes a **Kshina Kalmasha** or one who is free from papam. What is papam as per Vedanta? Anything that obstructs our spiritual progress is papam. Our very desire for spirituality is due to our punyams. Nevertheless, there can be obstructions in life such as health, family, external situations etc. Nishkama karma will make all such obstacles go away.

Yatatmanaha: means one who develops the necessary discipline. I have to work for spiritual growth. Liberation is not based upon God's will. It is based upon our desire. God is not the one who decides upon liberation of a person. God is not a partial God. I have to make use of Gods grace as my free will. While sunlight is there using solar energy is in my hands.

God's grace is available to all. Some have tapped into it and others have not. Vivekam and Vairagyam do not happen on its own, I have to make it happen. I have to make the effort. The tendency to say, " everything is in his hands" is an escapist one.

Yatatmanaha also means working for qualification or knowledge. In chapter 4 Sri Krishna advises that for this knowledge one has to seek a Guru and shastram.

Rishayaha means a rishi. Once I perform all sadhanas I become a rishi or a Gyani. Even a person living in society can be rishi. It does not mean every ochre robed swami is necessarily a Rishi.

Chhinna dvaida means knowledge that is free from all doubts or having conviction in the knowledge. Am I convinced about the teaching? Vedantic knowledge is revolutionary in that it deals

with world, the God and me. Am I really immortal? Remember Shankaracharya's shloka of Chiddananda Roopa Shivoham Shivoham. There should not be an iota of doubt about my immortality.

"You are God" is a very difficult concept to accept.

"the world you experience is less real than You", another difficult concept to accept. Do you accept all of them? Conviction comes from reflection and questioning. This process is called mananam. So removal of all doubts is called mananam. Chhinadvaida means without a doubt.

Brahmanirvanam Labhante: means such a person attains oneness with Brahman. What is attaining one-ness with Brahman? Here there is no physical merger with God. If that were the case Brahman will have to be a separate entity. Vedanta says Brahman is all pervading. Therefore, here merger with Brahman means dropping the notion that I am separate from Brahman due to my ignorance. This is merger.

Summarizing the stages to reach Gyanam:

1. Follow values of life
2. Become pure
3. Take initiative for spiritual growth and this involves acquiring sadhana chatushtaya sampathi and guru pra
4. Gain knowledge
5. Gain conviction
6. Merger in Brahman

In this context Swamiji cited an advice:

For saving one family, you can sacrifice a member.

For saving one village you can sacrifice one family.

For saving the nation; you can sacrifice one village;

For the sake of moksha; you must be prepared to sacrifice everything;

Shloka # 26:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ५.२६ ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ५.२६ ॥

On both sides, the peace of Brahman is there for the self-restrained ascetics, who are released from lust and wrath, and have known the Self.

So the same idea as in the previous shloka is repeated here for further clarity. Here also various stages of spiritual growth are pointed out. The first stage is kamakrodhaviyuktanam. Kamaha means desire for acquisition and krodhaha means anger caused by the obstacle in acquiring things or anger caused by the loss of things acquired. So kama will invariably lead to krodhaha. We also discussed this in detail in the third chapter under shloka 3.37.

And this management of kama and krodhaha is possible when I know a basic principle of Vedanta. What is that basic principle? It is that my happiness does not depend upon what I have but it depends upon what I am. So always focus on what I am, not on what I have. So if this is understood, our worry for yoga and kshema will come down otherwise kama will lead to more and more preservation such that I will have no time for spirituality. Life will be spent on yoga and kshema; yoga here means acquisition; kshema means preservation; in this process only our stress will increase as something or the other in life will always not work out.

We have to manage kama and krodha for getting Vairagyam.

Yatchetasam: means those who have integrated their mind. Mind is required for the spiritual journey. The mind has to be focused. Unless my mind is focused enough I will not be able to pursue spirituality. The capacity to focus is also known as Samadhi. Satka sampatti is essential so that all my organs cooperate with me in my spiritual journey.

process and result of meditation in chapter 6. Here he briefly touches upon it.

Sitting in a proper posture, evening out the breath, he regulates his mind. The eye should be focused between the eyebrows and withdrawn from the mind. This removes all sense objects from the mind. Don't think of external objects during meditation.

Shloka # 28:

Meditation is to be performed with all organs withdrawn from external world. Get rid of all emotional disturbances. One should focus on moksha alone. In this stage the teaching is assimilated.

Shloka # 29:

शान्तिं प्राप्नुयान् शान्तिं प्राप्नुयान् शान्तिं प्राप्नुयान्
शान्तिं प्राप्नुयान् शान्तिं प्राप्नुयान् शान्तिं प्राप्नुयान् 5.29

He attains peace knowing Me, the partaker of sacrifices and penances, the supreme Lord of the whole world and friend of all living beings.

The object of meditation is to meditate on “ me” or God the ultimate lord of creation, who is located in the heart of all beings. Meditating thus, you will attain shanti.

Take Away:

1. Empathy or feeling for others is a foundational requirement for a seeker. It is the foundation for all other virtues of life. The entire human character is based on this one capacity. Do you feel your wife's pain? Do you feel your children's pain? You have to develop empathy.
2. Meditation is recommended for assimilation of Gita teachings. This way the teachings enter deep into your subconscious mind.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy

Taitreya Upanishads, Class 9

Homa sadhana (Fire rituals) students ask for fourfold prayer

1. Dhana prapthi; asking for prosperity primarily meant for dharma for completing karma yoga
2. Chitha sudhi prabthi; purifying the mind; this is described as deivi sampth in Baghawat Geeta.
3. Gyana prapthi
4. Sishya prapthi; share the knowledge by sharing with the next generation;

Money should lead to purity; purity should lead to knowledge; and knowledge should lead to teaching.

Fourth Anuravaga (Continued)

May students come to me. May students come to me with varied interests. May students come to me with intelligence. May students come to me with sense control. May students come to me with mind control. May I be well known as a teacher among the people. May I be the greatest among the wealthy. Oh Lord! May I merge into you. Oh Lord! Mat you merge into me. Oh Lord! Mat students come to me from all directions. May students come to me just as waters rush downwards and just as the months rush towards the next year. Oh Lord! You are like a rest house. Reveal yourself until me and enter into me

In this verse, the seeker is praying for shishya prapthi so that he can share his knowledge.

Brahma means vedas and chari is the one who has a disciplined life; one who is not concerned about sthula sareeram but strives for vedic knowledge; Brhamachari primary meaning is a dedicated student, not necessarily a bachelor.

The seeker is parying for students with varied interests. There are three types of students:

1. Mandha students: Stem of like plantain stem – one who is difficult to light up,
2. Madhyama student – like coal, can be lit after an extended time
3. Uthama student – like camphor; easy to light up.

Bha – light of knowledge; ratha – revel; Bharatham is reveling in the light of knowledge. The seeker is praying for students with sense control and mind control. The seeker is praying for wealth so that he can provide for the students who come to him for education. The one who spends for Saraswathy (Knowledge) should not owrry about Lakshmi (Money).

The seeker is praying for jivatma paramatma aikyam, similar to the river merging into ocean. Not only the river merges into ocean, ocean also merges with the river. This is why the river water before the point of merger is salty.

Each manifestation of god is like a branch of Eeswara similar to the tributaries of a great river. By dipping in any tributary of the river, we purify our body; similarly, by worshiping any of the form of the lord, you are purifying your mind. Physical purity is obtained by dipping into river; mental purity is obtained by remembering the Lord. This is nothing but worshiping the Lord.

The prayer is concluded asking for students:

- Just as the water gushes through the slope, students should come to me
- Just like each month is rusing towards next year, students should come to me from all directions.

By comparing Lord to a rest house, the seeker says when we are frustrated with our pursuit of gyna, Bakthi and devotion will help us overcome the frustration. Surrendering to the Lord is the solution when one is over whelmed by frustration.

There is no physical movement in jivatma paramatma aikyam, because Bhagavan is not away from me. Merger into Bhagawan means dropping the notion that Bhagawan is away from me and with the clear knowing "Aham Brahma Asmi"