

AUM AMRITESHVARYAI NAMA

Swami Kaivalyanandaji's Talks on Bhagavad Gita, Part 32

Remembering the Guru Parampara, we begin our discussion on the Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Verse 50, Shankara Bhashya

**Buddhiyukto jahatīha ubhe sukṛtaduṣkṛte
Tasmād yogāya yujyasva yoga karmasu kauśalam. 2.50.**

There is a question. 'Swami said that the Jiva has no control over Prana. How does this apply to a Jnani?'

Saying that the Jiva has no control over Prana, is aimed at ordinary Jivas. For a Yogi who strives to control the Prana, it will be possible to control it. Through special practices, they are able to control the Prana, and make it act how they wish. However, we said that the ordinary Jiva has no kind of control over the Prana. The questioner asks, 'how long does the vibration of Prana remain in the subtle body?'

In other words, 'for how long will this beginningless Samsara of birth and death remain?' For that length of time, the vibration of Prana will exist in the subtle body. When we speak about matters after death, such as accepting a new body, these things are aided by Prana. This will be said in the 15th chapter.

As long as the body exists, there will be the spandana, the vibration of Prana. The questioner asked about the condition of a Jnani. That is same for the Jnani. For a Jnani, there is only this difference; this is that the Prana doesn't exit from this body. That's all. 'Tatraiva samavaliyante.' We have discussed this a lot in the Brahma Sutra classes. This 'utkramanam' the exiting from the body, doesn't occur. Does the Jnani have a gross body? Will will have to say that he does. Even if this isn't in the Supreme Truth, we will have to say that there is a gross body.

Why is that? It is because the Jnani interacts in the world. A Jnani does many works like writing books, advising disciples, etc. according to Dharma. Thus, depending on what do these take place? These actions depend on the gross body. So what is said? We say that the Jnani has a gross body. The same is true for the subtle body. There is no difference

between these. If we can show that the Jnani has a gross body, then he also has a subtle body. If he has a subtle body, then all of these will exist.

Then another question may come. 'Does the Jnani have a causal body?' This is because the causal body, or kāraṇa śarīram, is generally called 'Ignorance.' The Jnani has destroyed Ajnana, Ignorance. If Ignorance has been destroyed, then how can a causal body remain? That is a common question. This is an important problem. If we see a gross and subtle body in the Jnani, then there is a causal body as well. 'Isn't Ajnana, Ignorance destroyed for the Jnani?'

Well, one rule is that if the cause is destroyed the effect is destroyed. If the mud is destroyed, there cannot be any pot. Thus, it is said that Ignorance is the cause of all of this. So, even after Ignorance is destroyed, what do we see? We see the gross and subtle bodies in the Jnani. Thus, if Ignorance is destroyed in the Jnani, the effects of that Ignorance should naturally be destroyed.

However, those are seen. Then if the cause is destroyed, how can the effects remain? This is a common question that arises in these discussions. There, what is said? We see the gross body. In the Supreme Truth, that is not real. Like that, for the subtle and causal body, even if they don't exist in the Supreme Truth, these are explained through 'baddhitā anuvṛtti.' This means that after their destruction, they continue to remain.

That is why we see activity in the Jnani, as well as the different states of consciousness, the waking, dream, and deep sleep states. All activities are there. The Jnani sleeps. He wakes up. All of these activities remain after being destroyed.

Then what is the difference between the two? The triad of bodies for the Jiva binds him, while the triad of bodies we superimpose doesn't bind the Jnani. Therefore, when we said before, 'as long as the Jiva Bhava remains,' this refers to the Ajnani. What about the Jnani? For the Jnani, this Jiva Bhava is unreal in the Supreme Truth, but we impose that on him. It is because that is imagined. It is because of Ignorance that the person sees this. The Jnani also recognizes that this imagining is unreal in the Supreme Truth. In the Supreme Truth, the Paramārtha, none of these exist.' The Jnani has this discrimination and recognition. That is spontaneous for the Jnani.

Therefore, 'does the Jnani have this Jiva Bhava?' 'Does he have a gross body?' 'Does he have a causal body?' If this is asked, it is 'in the Supreme Truth, these don't exist, but as impositions, they remain.' We call a person Jnani because he recognizes these superimpositions.. 'Why do these remain?' 'Why are these superimposed?' To this, we can say,

‘prarabdha.’ That has already begun. That prarabdha is in the form of samskāra, mental impressions. Along with the destruction of those samskāras, all of this disappears.

Then this triad of bodies ceases to exist. All that is superimposed disappears. That is the answer given to this question.

If there is any doubt about the subtle body of the Jnani, it’s enough to think about the gross body. The same is true for the casual body. Everywhere, the answer is the same. All of this can happen in the subtle body. Like that, this can all occur in the gross body. In the Brahma Sutras, we discussed the sutra, ‘paśvādiviṣṭaviśeṣa.’ In that part, we discussed this subject in great detail. It will good to pay attention to that part again.

Now, we are on the 50th shloka.

**Buddhiyukto jahātiha ubhe sukṛtaduṣkṛte
Tasmād yogāya yujyasva yoga karmasu kauśalaṁ. 2.50.**

The bhāṣyā says, ‘buddhiyuktaḥ karmasamatvaviṣayayā buddhyā yuktaḥ buddhiyuktaḥ saḥ jahāti parityajati iha asmin loke.’ The first word, ‘buddhiyukto,’ means a person with ‘samatvabuddhi,’ evenness of mind. Here, the shloka is speaking about someone with an even mind. With that understanding, ‘jahāti parityajati,’ he discards, renounces, ‘iha asmin loke ubhe sukṛtaduṣkṛte punyapāpe sattvaśuddhi jñānaprāptidvāreṇa.’

So it says, ‘asmin loke,’ in this body itself, or in this world, ‘ubhe sukṛtaduṣkṛte,’ merit and demerit, punya and papa. We have already explained this in the last two discussions. How does this complete destruction take place? ‘sattvaśuddhi jñānaprāptidvāreṇa.’ It is through chitta śuddhi, mental purity, and jñāna prāpti, the attainment of Self-knowledge. There is more coming one karma yoga, in the 3rd chapter. There, more will be explained. In the other sections to come, karma yoga will again come.

Here we are discussing the different facets of karma yoga. We have already discussed one aspect of this. Karma Yoga hasn’t been completed. From here on, we will continue to discuss in the coming sections of the Gita. So it says, ‘sattvaśuddhi jñānaprāptidvāreṇa.’ How does the karma yogi destroys this karma samskāra? It is through purity of mind and Self-knowledge.

‘Yataḥ tasmād,’ therefore, ‘samatvabuddhi yogāya yujyasva ghatasva.’ There, what is it? The shloka says, in the second line, ‘tasmād yogāya yujyasva.’ ‘Arjuna become prepared for Yoga.’ What is that Yoga? It is the Yoga of samatva buddhi, even understanding, evenness of mind. For that Yoga, which is evenness of mind, ‘yujyasva,’ become ready!’

Here, the Lord tells Arjuna, 'Yogāya yujyasva,' become ready for Yoga!' This said in several sections. The Lord says several times, 'be prepared to fight!' Here, instead of saying, 'be prepared to fight!' it says, 'be prepared for Yoga!' Both of these are only one. Here, where it normally says, 'war,' it says, 'Yoga.' This is not the ordinary use of the word 'war.' This isn't the war we are familiar with. Here, 'war' is one's svadharma, inherent duty, and that is also the practice of Yoga.

The Lord is forcefully prompting Arjuna to fight. This means that the Lord is prompting Arjuna to Yoga. Even if fighting the war was Arjuna's duty, it doesn't say to act in the war in the ordinary sense. This is because we have discussed this subject of war previously. There is a big difference between the normal fighting in war, and performing this act as Yoga. Some people don't understand this and debate this. What is that? 'The Lord prompts Arjuna to fight. If the Lord prompted Arjuna to fight, that will increase the vāsana in man to attack and fight. That is himsa.' People debate in this way.

Therefore, what do some people do? To justify the Gita, they say that the Lord didn't prompt Arjuna to fight. For some people, war becomes necessary. They thus utilize the Gita to carry out the war. Therefore, what do some people say? They strongly say, 'the Lord prompts Arjuna to fight.'

However, there is a matter that both sides forget. This is something we should always be aware of. Here, what is 'war?' It is Yoga. This isn't an ordinary war. This war isn't like the First and Second World Wars that we have read about. What is the reason? It is because there is no Yoga there. Here, what happens? There is Yoga. Truly, the Lord is prompting Arjuna to this Yoga. It is just that the karma Arjuna had to perform as Yoga was war then. That's all.

When war is performed as Yoga, that is different from ordinary war. We said before, 'what is the reason for choosing this kind of circumstance?' This is to give instruction to the world, 'whatever action is one's svadharma, whether big or small, it should be performed in Yoga.' This is to show that this can even be in a war.

There is not a single karma more intense, and powerful than war. Even in such a war, a person can perform with evenness of mind as Yoga. When this is said, it means that all people can perform the actions that come as their svadharma, no matter what they may be, as Yoga. Here, this war isn't a dharma of the Vedas. Instead, this is a worldly karma, a laukika karma. So, in whatever karma it may, it may be performed like this; as Yoga.' To show this, war is chosen as a symbol. 'Even if it is war, that can happen.' What the karma is depends on the svadharma of the individual.

That can happen, in the circumstance where war is inevitable. However, when that is performed in the principles of Yoga, what is the goal? For the performer, that is chitta śuddhi, purity of mind. He acts for mental purity. That is the ultimate instruction that is given. The Lord speaks about other fruits from performing in war. What is that?

‘Hato vā prāpsyasi svargaṁ jītvā vā bhoksyase mahīm.’ All of this are the other fruits of war. This says, ‘if you die, you will attain heaven. If you are victorious, you will enjoy the Earth.’ For any karma, there are endless results. These are just the primary fruits. Even if such karmic fruits exist, and the Lord made Arjuna aware of these, what does the Lord say later? ‘In those, you must not have desire!’

‘This is the karma, and these are the fruits of the karma.’ Karma Yoga isn’t merely performed without knowing this, or without discrimination, However, without the desire behind these karmas, even if it is war, one must perform karma in the spirit of Yoga.’

So if we tell people that the Lord prompted Arjuna for war there is a danger. Because for ordinary people war means ordinary worldly war. Then one can say that the person prompts the people out of himsa, to attack. However, this is not primarily that kind of war. This war is part of the svadharma of Arjuna. Even more importantly, it is to be performed as Yoga. Thus, no matter what karma it may be, if that is one’s svadharma, one may perform it with the spirit of Yoga. That is what it says here.

So it says here, ‘yogāya yujyasva.’ ‘Be ready for Yoga.’ Therefore, if we come across such arguments, we should understand that the person speaking does not have any deeper knowledge of the subject.

Then the next part is explained. ‘Yogo hi karmasu kauśalaṁ. Svadharmākhyeṣu karmasu vartamānasya yā siddhyasiddhyoḥ samatvabuddhiḥ īśvarārpiṭachetaḥ tayā tat kauśalaṁ.’ The last part of the shloka says, ‘yogaḥ karmasu kauśalaṁ.’ ‘Yoga is skill in action.’ This is explained in several ways. Here Shankara explains. Here the word ‘kauśalaṁ’ means ‘skill.’ Then, ‘svadharmākhyeṣu karmasu.’ Wherever it says ‘karma,’ Shankara says specifically, ‘svadharma.’ These are the karmas called as one’s svadharma, ‘vartamānasya yā siddhyasiddhyoḥ samatvabuddhiḥ.’ This is the evenness of mind in both siddhi and asiddhi, success and failure.

‘Īśvarārpiṭa chetaḥ.’ This is again explained. ‘With a mind surrendered to God.’ ‘Tayā tat kauśalaṁ kuśala bhāvaḥ.’ Through that, this is kauśalam, skill in action. Thus, this is the skill in having evenness of mind in the performance of karma. This is a skill that exists within the individual when one performs karma. Here, ‘skill’ doesn’t refer to the karma, but

within the individual. This means a 'skill' in the antaḥkaraṇa of the performer of the karma. What is that 'skill?'

'Īśvarārpitachetaḥ.' The karma yogi's mind is surrender to God. That is also called as 'samatva buddhi,' evenness of mind. We said before that this samatva buddhi can come in different ways. One was said before; it is through the ātmā bhāvana of the karma yogi, his identification with his True Self. That can happen. We have also discussed the second way. What is that? It is through a mind surrender to God.

That evenness of mind is 'kauśalaṁ kuśala bhāvaḥ.' This means 'dexterity, skill.' This kind of dexterity is situated in the karma yogi's antaḥkaraṇa. That is the meaning.

We normally refer to dexterity in the actual process of performing the action. This is the dexterity to perform the action in the proper way, without any defects. Some people commentate on the shloka like that. 'Yogaḥ karmasu kauśalaṁ.' If one performs an action in the correct way, it becomes Yoga.' That is how some commentate.

Explaining like that isn't wrong. However, it's just that the karma yoga won't be complete from that only. 'When performing action, do it correctly, in the proper way. Solve the shortcomings in that action. Complete that action.' You can say that there is a meaning in that sense also. However, primarily, what is it? It is this here, 'īśvarārpitachetaḥ,' a mind surrendered to the Lord. That is where the importance should be placed.

If a person performs the action in a proper way, without that mind surrendered to God, that will never become Karma Yoga. That is why it says specifically, 'īśvarārpitachetaḥ.' That is why it is said that without awareness of God, īśvara bodha, no matter how well the action is performed, no matter how 'selfless' one thinks it is, that doesn't become karma yoga.

Why is that? When such a person performs action, there will be a prompting behind the action. There will be some kind of desire behind that action. Otherwise, action won't happen. What happens when one performs good actions, prompted by desire? This causes one's merit to grow. That becomes a meritorious karma. That becomes a great karma. But it can't be karmayoga. This is if the action is performed without the surrender to God.

This is because all of the actions of the karma yogi have a single goal. What is that? It is chitta śuddhi, purity of mind. There is nothing else for the karma yogi, besides chitta śuddhi. The fruits of karma will be what they are, the external fruits. That's not something he has to desire. What is the inner intention, the desire of the karma yogi? It is for chitta śuddhi. We said before that this desire isn't an obstacle in the sādhak's spiritual progress. Without a single desire, no action can take place.

So, because he solely desires purity of mind, the karma yogi doesn't accept any other fruits from the karma. Ultimately, the desire for chitta śuddhi is the renunciation of all other desires. That is what distinguishes this from other desires. When we say that a person desires mokṣa, we will ask, 'isn't the desire for mokṣa a desire? Shouldn't the sādhak be free of all desires? Isn't desire a bondage?' Some ask all of this.

What is meant by the desire for mokṣa? That is the desire that renounces all desires. It is the desire to renounce all desires. Only through depending on such a desire is it possible to renounce other kinds of desire. That is a means. Without depending on such a means, it isn't possible to renounce other forms of desire.

Then will this means stand as an obstacle? No. Why is that? It is because the desire for mokṣa is the desire to renounce all desires. In the desire is the desire for mokṣa also. That is included. Then what happens? Along with the renunciation of all desires, this will also be destroyed. However, that may be accepted as a means to enter that state.

There is no action that exists free from an instrument. All actions can be accomplished only through an upadhi, an instrument. For striving on the path to Mokṣa, some means will have to be accepted, knowingly. Knowing that these are not true in the ultimate sense, one accepts these means. What do these means do? In the fruit of the action, these disappear of themselves. There is no particular action necessary for destroying these.

Therefore, asking questions like, 'if the karma yogi has the desire for mokṣa, won't that stand as an obstacle?', is a negative argument. The karma yogi performs karma with the mind depending on that desire alone, for chitta śuddhi. There is awareness about the other kinds of fruits, but no desire. Let the external fruits be. Those become transform into being beneficial to others.

Because the karma yogi has no desire for the fruit of karma, what happens? All of those karmas become 'parārtham,' for the benefit of others. In truth, only then does 'selflessness' come into the karma. Only that kind of karma can be called a 'selfless action.' All other forms of action are selfish. Why? It is because these karma lack īśvara bodha, awareness of God.

When actions are performed thus, what happens? No matter how great they may be, these karma will create the modification of punya, merit. Therefore, the Jiva attains the upwards path. All of that is good. In contrast with other kinds of selfish actions, that is great. However, it isn't possible to call the action 'karma yoga' because of that. What is needed for the Karma Yogi? It is this mind surrender to God mentioned here. 'Ishvarārpitachetaḥ.'

When karmas are performed in that way, another common question is, ‘how will the karma being performed be?’ ‘Will that karma be complete? Or will there be shortcomings in the karma?’ People ask this. Here it says, the karma yogi must identify with his own True Self. Can a person who identifies with the Self and performs karma can have true alertness in the karma? How will it be possible for the mind to be in the karma and identifying with the Self?’

The mind has such a specialty. The mind can only be situated in one place at a time. It isn’t possible for the mind to be in two places at once. This is in the ordinary case. If the mind becomes one-pointed somewhere, other objects are dropped from the mind. Then, how can the karma yogi perform identification with the Self, while carefully performing the karma? Will he have subtle one-pointedness in the performance of the karma?’

‘If there is no one-pointedness in the karma, how can that karma become completed?’ How can that karma be performed in the correct way?’ Here, it says, ‘yogaḥ karmasu kauśalaṁ.’ Yoga is dexterity in action.’ Thus, in the external level, won’t the skill in the action be lost to the karma yogi? That would be a shortcoming in the karma.’

In the worldly view, when a person performs a karma, the completion of the karma is necessary. Otherwise, there will be shortcomings in the worldly level. If we are unable to perform the actions of our svadharma in the proper way, even though that may not create a defect in the spiritual view, in the worldly view, that is a big shortcoming. Thus, in karma yoga, won’t one experience disinterestedness in the karma?’ Won’t one lose enthusiasm in karma?’ Some people raise such doubts.

In that way, some people think, ‘one can perform karmas as karma yoga in whatever way one likes,’ and they intentionally perform the actions without alertness.’ Then what is the answer? They say “I am a karmayogi. that’s all I can do.” In order to become karmayogis they intentionally do karma without any interest. Once, there was a brahmachari in an ashram. This isn’t this ashram, but another one (laughs). His job was to cook. Then, there was a class in the ashram about karma yoga. The next day, the rice was overcooked. Then, immediately there was a complaint. ‘The rice is overcooked.’ Because he was a karma yogi, he couldn’t react. He had to show through action. Then, what did he do? This isn’t a story. The next day, the rice was not cooked properly.

Then no one could complain. Then the next day, the curry dishes were very spicy. This was again complained about. The next day there was no spice in the curry; the next day there was no salt in the food and the next day there was more salt.

Then they called this karma yogi and asked, 'what is going on?' Before studying the Gita, there was no problem. He cooked the food nicely. Then, after studying the Gita, why has this happened? He said, 'before studying the Gita, I was a cook. That is why I cooked nicely. However, now I'm a karma yogi.' (laughs) You can eat if you like. This is only what is possible for me.' This is what he said.

Thus, the person means, 'I used to act, without thinking about the Atman. Therefore, when I started to think about the Atman, I am unable to pay as much attention as before. Then, I couldn't do anything more. So eat if you want or you can cook yourself. Then, some people say that this happens in karmayoga.'

'This means that when one performs karma yoga, the quality of karma will decrease, as well as the śraddha.' Many people say this. Can that happen? It's not possible for that to happen. To have disinterestedness towards the karma, to lose enthusiasm in the karma, to have less śraddha in the karma; all of these have no relation with karma yoga at all.

When performing karma, the karma must be done with śraddha. This is for the times when śraddha is necessary. The karma must be performed with alertness. Why is that? Because, what is a karma yogi requested to do? Why is he requested to have surrender to God, etc? This is requested to destroy the karma yogi's ahanta, his ego. The feeling of 'I' stands as an obstacle to the awareness of God, īśvara bodha. It says to perform karma in the spirit of Yoga, to remove the feeling of 'I' with surrender to God.

In truth, what happens through īśvara bhāva, one's close identification with God? It is the renunciation of the feeling of 'I.' Why that happen? It is because the mind becomes one-pointed there. Whenever one feels the gross form of the ego, in pride, etc., the karma yogi changes this immediately by contemplating that 'I can't feel proud like this', 'This isn't my own ability', or 'I'm feeling proud of this body' He accepts īśvara bodha, awareness of God, for renounces that.

In whatever situation that false pride arises, that is where one practices spiritual practices for intentionally avoiding that. We said in the previous class, that even if the ahanta remains at all times, it transforms in two ways; grossly and subtly. In the subtle form, even if there is ahanta, the ego, we don't know this ahanta in the form of pride, connected to our actions.

Why is that? It is because the mind isn't centered in that form of the ahanta. When a person performs an action, with his mind one-pointedly immersed in the karma, there the ahanta doesn't remain. This means that the gross form of ahanta isn't being manifest. That is why it isn't necessary to renounce the ego through gross practices. This is because the one-

pointedness of the mind is primary, and the mind should become one-pointed in dharmic actions, not in adharma.

When the karma yogi performs karma, the mind is immersed in the karma with one-pointedness and with control. There, the ahanta, or ego is not manifest. It isn't necessary to destroy the ahanta that isn't manifest. Whenever the ahanta becomes manifest, he destroys it. Therefore, when the karma yogi performs karma, with however much śraddha he is able to perform the karma, that is how much he is able to forget the ego. However much śraddha is in the action, that is how good the action will be.

Then, some may ask, 'then once the mind becomes immersed in karma like that, won't his īśvara bodha be lost?' Some ask this. 'Won't the karma yogi only have awareness of the karma? Won't his awareness of God be destroyed?'

The karma yogi can be either one who begins to practice karma yoga or a perfect in karma yoga. These two are called 'aruruṣu' and 'arudha.' In whatever field it is, there are these two kinds of people. One person is an 'aruruṣu;' this means that he is trying to enter the practice. Another person may be an 'arudhan,' one who has climbed through experienced.

When we normally perform karma, even when our śraddha is in the karma, there are some kinds of śraddha that are sustained. One is 'deha bodha,' awareness of the body, most primarily. While performing the karma with śraddha, this exists. 'Strī puruṣaḥ bheda chintā.' Or, one will have a general thought about one's individuality. All of these matters are ingrained. Even if it isn't necessary for us to think about these consciously, these matters exist there.

When a man performs karma, the thought, 'I am a man,' is ingrained within him. When a woman performs a karma, the awareness 'I am a woman,' is ingrained within. That is never the opposite. A man doesn't think that he's a woman, and a woman doesn't think that she's a man. What is this? These are thoughts that are natural to the Jiva.

Then, when a person performs a karma, just from performing it with śraddha won't cause any change in these natural feelings of the Jiva. 'Who am I? What is my position?' Without these ingrained feelings being changed or forgotten, what happens? He becomes one-pointed in the external karma. He performs the karma with concentration.

What does the karma yogi do? We said before, the karma yogi performs karma, united with understanding, 'buddhi yukto.' He tries to make his awareness of karma yoga and the Self more firm. This doesn't mean that he destroys the śraddha in the karma. Whenever he grasps that awareness about the Self, what happens? The karma yogi isn't an ordinary

individual. He has a determination about karma yoga. How is this determination? It comes from the instructions of the Guru, satsang, etc.

Thus, without destroying this determination, he constantly sustains it in the level of awareness. When he goes to the level of karma, this samskara will be alongside him. In the same way that a mere karmī sustains his awareness of the body in the karma, this samskara of Yoga is constantly sustained within the karma yogi.

Thus, in karmayogi there is neither complete awareness nor total forgetfulness. When an ordinary person becomes immersed in karma, he doesn't clearly remember, but he completely forgets. However, in general the awareness of a karmi will be in the body level whereas in the karma yogi, the awareness will be in his true nature.

Therefore, according to the progress in the practice of karma yoga, the awareness of the Self becomes firmer and firmer naturally in the place where there was awareness of the body. That process of making this firm is called the arurukṣu. Once this is firm, one is called 'arūdhan.' Thus, if one is able to perform karma by sustaining awareness of the body, not remembering anything in particular, in the same way, the karma yogi can act with concentration, without remembering anything in particular, while sustaining awareness of the Self. That is possible.

Then, there will be a difference in the actions that he performs. That will be there. If the action requires full presence of mind, that will be there. Otherwise, there will actions that don't require full presence of mind. That is the difference in the actions, and the conditions of the actions.

When a person starts to learn swimming, no matter with how much śraddha and alertness he puts, he will have difficulty and drink the water. Thus, an action isn't completed through one-pointedness of mind alone. When a person steps down into the water, who is first learning to swim, he isn't thinking about anything else. Nothing else is in the mind not even about his body. However, no matter how much śraddha he has, when he practices, he will drink the water.

And then, what about after that? Then, he will be able to perform that action, swimming without this difficulty. There, one-pointedness isn't needed in the karma. So, it is not a rule that one-pointedness of mind is necessary to complete that karma. Even if there isn't one-pointedness, it is possible to perform a karma correctly. How is that? It is through practice.

Through practice, once the person becomes familiar with that karma, even if the mind isn't one-pointed, we can do that action. A person who has practiced swimming, won't sink

and drown, even if his mind isn't one-pointed on the swimming. At the same time, for a person who is practicing, he can perform it only if he gives his full attention. This is because he hasn't perfected that karma. This can be called, 'karma siddhiḥ,' in the worldly sense.

Thus, what happens to a person without this 'karma siddhi?' Even if his mind is fully on the karma, he won't be able to complete it. That is a mundane law. At the same time, for a person who has perfected that karma, even if there are other objects in the mind, he is able to perform the karma fully. Therefore, we cannot say that because a karma yogi's mind is in remembrance of God, or that it isn't one-pointed in the karma, that that karma isn't complete.

That is a matter that depends on the level of practice in the individual. It isn't the one-pointedness in the karma that is primary. Then, there are some actions that must be done with great concentration. In those kinds of actions, if it becomes necessary, for example, when a doctor performs an operation. That is an action that must be done with great care. There, in a situation where concentration is fully required, a person must perform it with concentration. That isn't an obstacle to karma yoga. In that situation, where one must be one-pointed, he doesn't have remembrance of the ego. He doesn't know about the ego, nor does he remember it.

There, it doesn't become necessary to renounce the ego through awareness of God. However, if a person is established in karma yoga, even in those situations where karma must be performed with full concentration, the ingrained bhāva within him will be that of God. Why is that? When he recalls the karma he performed, he does not feel proud with respect to the body. Because while he was performing the action his mind was completely immersed in isvara bhava.

Instead, even when he thinks about that karma, what becomes manifest within him is that īśvara bhāva, the feeling of the Lord. Therefore, what do we know? Even in the circumstance where the individual's mind was one-pointed in the action, though not in the level of awareness this īśvara bhāva was sustained. For a mere karmī, one without that kind of awareness, suppose he also has to perform such an action with full concentration. After performing that action with great care, afterwards, when he remembers the karma, he can only remember through the ego. Feeling pride in his ability, he remembers the karma with identification with the body. That is the difference between the two.

Why does that happen, for the karmī? In the performance of the karma, even though it isn't consciously, that identification with the body is sustained; thus, the karma is dependant on the ego. However, a person who develops awareness of God through the

practice of karma yoga, that doesn't happen. Instead, whenever performing an action, or whenever he thinks about himself in relation to the karma, or after the performance of the action, in all these circumstances where he remembers the karma, this ingrained īśvara bhāva, feeling of identification with God is sustained.

Therefore, where it says, 'yogaḥ karmasu kauśalaṁ,' the karma of the karma yogi must be complete. This meaning also applies to the karma yogi. However, just through the completion of the karma doesn't make the karma yoga complete. Karma yoga isn't completed just through the completion of the karma. There, there must be this, 'īśvara arpitā cheats,' a mind surrendered to God. Only once that comes, does the karma become karma yoga. That is a matter that should be given attention here.

Therefore, there is another thing. This is speaking about karma yoga. This can speak about different kinds of worship. That isn't karma yoga. There, that is said. In the circumstance of practicing such kinds of worship, a person may be unable to perform the karma in the correct way. That is also said. That is in certain particular forms of upāsana. This means to completely avoid other kinds of action. This is said in the case of one in Jñāna Niṣṭhā, the abidance in Self-knowledge.

The sādhak in Jñāna Niṣṭhā avoids all forms of karma, and remains in the level of Jñāna. Like that, in certain practices, there are things said. In the practice of Yoga, a person avoids other forms of karma, and becomes immersed in certain practices. For a person immersed in this way, if he comes to the realm of intense karma, he won't be able to perform. This is because he needs more time for such practices.

That's not what is being discussed here. This isn't speaking about a practice. It's not about any particular form of worship. Here, it is speaking about karma yoga. In karma yoga, there are not such problems. In karma yoga, primarily a person performs karma. The sādhak is in the midst of karma. That isn't a practice to leave the stage of karma. Thus, when a person becomes immersed in such karmas, because he is a karma yogi, there is no chance of there being shortcomings in the action because of that. That is what we see. That is what we see in the practice of karma yoga.

Otherwise, it will say later, 'joṣayet sarvakarmāṇi vidvān yuktaḥ samāchāra.' A person is detached from karma, while performing karma powerfully. This is because others must be prompted to perform karma. Man should be led to karma yoga, or if not, to karma. Man should never be led to akarma, inertia. That is the Lord says in the coming sections. This is said to take as an example. In the coming sections, we will discuss this.

Here it says, for one, 'īśvarārpitachetas,' with mind surrender to God. Where it says ātmā bhāvana, identification with the Self, and īśvarāpita,' surrender to God, there is a slight difference. For renouncing the ego, a karma yogi develops the bhāva of non-attachment. This bhāva of non-attachment, is in one way, a kind of 'upāsana,' worship. That is why this is a part of karma. We previously discussed the view of Shankara, 'Jñāna and karma can never be combined.'

Here, where it says to remember the Self, we may feel a doubt. 'Isn't there again this combination of Jñāna and karma?' 'Isn't this like the state of the Jnani?' No. Here, in truth, the Self-awareness (Atma bodha) of the karma yogi is kind of upāsana, worship. What Shankaracharya refutes is the combination of Jñāna and karma. He doesn't refute the combination of the karma and upāsana. This is said in several places of Shankara's commentaries. We have previously discussed this.

When we discussed Shankara's bhāṣyā of the Isā Vāsya Upanishads, this topic was discussed. In Advaita, the combination of karma and upāsana is not refuted. However, it says that it isn't possible to practice both Jñāna and karma. Why is that not possible? That karmī has the feeling of doer-ship, while the Jnani does not. Therefore, both cannot exist in the same place.

However, for the karma yogi, he has the awareness of doer-ship. He doesn't have Atma Bodha, Self-awareness, within. Then, why do we say that the karma yogi practices Atma Bhāvana? This is done artificially. This doesn't shine within spontaneously. In the Jnani, that awareness shines naturally. Whatever we do artificially is called 'upāsana.' Whatever comes spontaneously is 'Jñāna,' and that which comes artificially is 'Upāsana.'

For the karma yogi, he has to do this artificially. According to what he hears from the Guru, or from the śāstras, without having any real kind of awareness, what does he do? He practices bhāvana, imagination on the qualities of the Atman, such as non-attachment. He performs bhāvana on being a non-doer, a non-enjoyer, etc. That is called 'kartṛ tantra.' That is not 'vastu tantra.' That is the difference between the two.

We have discussed this matter in the Brahma Sutra classes. All of that has been explained repeatedly. It should be clear. Then, here what happens? A person who has the ingrained feeling of doer-ship, he artificially creates this awareness through will power. That is why it is called 'upāsana.' He strives to sustain that awareness. This also exists, depending on the feeling of doer-ship.

Thus, depending on the feeling of doer-ship, he performs karmas. What does he do, relying on the feeling of doer-ship? He tries to sustain his bhāvana, or imagination, about the

Atman. Because of that, these are both of the same nature. These are in the same class, thus there is no conflict between them.

Therefore, the defect of the combination of Jñāna and karma doesn't occur here. There are different kinds of upāsana. There are different kinds of upāsana described in the Chandhogya and Bṛhadaraṇyaka Upanishads. When we speak about ātmā tattva, there is an upāsana called the 'ahaṁkaro upāsana.' This is to practice upāsana, through the feeling, 'I am the Atman.'

In the karma yogi, in truth, it is the same thing that happens. The karma yogi imagines, 'I am the Self.' Or, he tries to sustain the awareness gained through the modification in the mind, 'I am the Self.' This is done through the feeling of doer-ship itself. This depends on that feeling, when he is striving. Therefore, this defect of combining Jñāna and karma doesn't occur. This is because the sādhak is an Ajnani.

Such a doubt arises in people. Thus, it says, 'yogah karmasu kauśalam.' This kauśalam, or dexterity, can be explained in any level. In the worldly level, this means the skill in performing the karma. In the spiritual level, this means gain obtained through the karma, mental purity. Thus, in the svadharma of the karma yogi, this dexterity can refer to svadharma. The karma yogi is skilled in determining his svadharma.

We said before, that today, it's not possible to determine one's svadharma through the śāstras. Why is that? It is because the times have changed. 'Shāstram pramāṇām te.' This means the scriptures are the authority in deciding one's dharma. The times of the śāstras have disappeared. What we can get from the śāstras are the values of dharma. However, we cannot get the nature of svadharma. Why? It is because there are no karma today that are mentioned in the śāstras.

The job of the karma yogi today is to run a school or ashram, etc. These aren't said in the śāstras. What the śāstras speak about are karma such as iṣṭapūrta karmas. That is the social view of the time. That is a shortcoming that we face. Recognizing that this is a shortcoming is good. We said before, that spirituality was a purely individual path then. That had no relation with the society.

Today, that time period has disappeared. Today, it's not possible for man to exist, isolated from the society. It's not even possible to live spiritually. In old times, a person who desired spirituality would leave society and enter the forest. Then the forest as a part of society has vanished. Therefore, now a person cannot find spirituality isolated from society. He must do that, while standing in the midst of the society.

Thus, it isn't possible to rely on the śāstras for determining one's svadharma. Why? It is because those śāstras have never spoken about this. Then what do we depend on? There have been hints about this. 'Muninām yathottaram pramāṇaḥ.' Accept as dharma whatever the Sages and Mahatmas of that time say.' That is it.

Today, what do Gurus and Mahatmas advise as dharma? It is to perform acts for the good of the society. Therefore, we can accept as our svadharma those acts which are beneficial to society. Any kind of doubt in that is not necessary. This is what all modern āchāryas say.

All of the action we perform are those which are beneficial to the society. We can accept such actions as our svadharma, and perform them.

In such matters, what should one do? One should also possess discrimination. That should also be utilized. Thus, it isn't for today's Guru to instruct in the same way as old. Why? Here, we are doing all these kinds of actions, through hospitals, schools, etc. In that, when we say to use one's own discrimination, this means that otherwise, the Guru won't be able to breathe.

'Should I turn to the right or left?' We will have to merely ask the Guru on every matter. What food should I eat?' If we try to solve all of this from the Guru, the Guru may leave the body. He'll stop breathing. Then one won't find another way to be saved.

This is because that will become too much to suffer. Therefore, without preventing the Guru from breathing, use discrimination along with the essence and values of dharma, to choose dharmic actions. Only then will we be able to recognize our svadharma. That is a common question; 'how can we know our svadharma?' If you look in the śāstras, you won't find it. The śāstras never wrote about working in a school, nor hospital.

Then, today, that is the stage in which we must act. Then, how should that be? What is there? Those values are still alive. So, keeping these values of dharma, using one's own discrimination, a person can perform actions that benefit the society. That is how the matters done by the karma yogi for him or herself become beneficial for the world. These become acts for the good of the world.

However, a person must be ready to use his or her own discrimination. That is necessary. If one doesn't use that discrimination, there will be difficulties, like the ones I described, and others. That will come. So, we said before, 'yogaḥ yogenā jñātavyaḥ.' Yoga must be known by Yoga itself.' When a person knows Yoga through Yoga, then he can recognize his dharma. He will have discrimination.

For example, take cooking. If all of the factors and ingredients are brought to one place, then the cooking is God's job. Even if that is desired, it's not possible to justify that. 'May God come and cook.' There, if God does everything like that, then the karma yogi will have nothing to do. Having brought together all of these things, then thinking, 'may God, or the Guru finish,' then the karma yogi has nothing to do. Some people desire that. So they say, 'let God do it.'

'I am a Yogi.' If that is done, then there is a work of eating. Then let God do that as well. Saying this is equal to us not using our discrimination. After gathering all of these materials, discrimination is needed to know how to use them. This is just an example. A person needs discrimination for knowing how to eat the food that is cooked. That is needed for the karma yogi.

Otherwise, simply saying, 'Let God do this,' or 'this can happen only if God does,' or 'this is for God to do, not me. I don't have an ounce of ego,' is a mental attitude. This is a lack of discrimination. That isn't discrimination, but lack of it. That is what I said before, that person needs his own discrimination about such matters. Otherwise, one says in the situation, 'let God do this.'

There are two things, instead of thinking, 'God is making me act,' thinking, 'let God do this,' is stupid. That person makes it backwards. Remember, 'it is God who gave the ability to perform this action.' Instead of this, one thinks, 'let God perform this action.' That karma yogi cannot think like that. These are two separate things. In that case, there is no karma yoga.

If a person thinks like that, what does he do? He develops a tamasic nature, full of laziness and sleep. That will just become an excuse, for escaping from his duty. Thus, this discrimination is needed for determining ones' svadharma. Otherwise, this is said for no purpose. For determining one's svadharma, use your own discrimination.

If all of these things are seen before one, the karma yogi will have the common sense that it is his dharma to use them to cook food. This is because there is hunger. Definitely that must be done. In that situation, he won't run to the Guru and ask, 'should I cook or not?' In other words, he performs the work the Guru assigns to him. He has that much freedom.

That is what is needed. Wherever one's own discrimination is needed, use it. In that kind of circumstances, there must also be the necessary good qualities, such as humility, etc. That is another matter. He needs īśvara bodha, awareness of God. How should the karma yogi choose karma, and practice? That is what we are discussing. Suppose we decide what

action we are going to perform. We perform it, and then realize that it will yield the opposite fruit of what we expected. Then we realize late that the karma is a bad action.

Then what does one do? This happens to some. They choose the karma, thinking that it is a good action, and then realize later that it was wrong. Then, what happens? For a karma yogi, there is neither gain or loss in any matter. We said this before. That is the evenness of mind in material gain and loss. When one takes and performs a karma, there may be shortcoming in the karma. It may produce the opposite fruit. All of these can happen. It says that even there, one needs evenness of mind.

Otherwise, there would be no need for evenness of mind, samatvabuddhi. If the result of karmas was always favorable, we wouldn't have to develop samatvabuddhi. All of this can be expected in a karma. Sometimes, the karma will end favorably. Sometimes, it may end in suffering. The Lord Himself says, 'gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ.' 'Only I know the secret of karma.' So, when we choose a karma using our own discrimination, if any shortcomings come, that never affects the karma yogi. That is samatvam, evenness.

Here it says, 'yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam.' 'Yoga is skill in action.' This means that all kinds of difficulties can come in the performance of a karma. This can be explained differently in different circumstances. From the examples of the lives of Mahatmas, we can understand, from their instructions as well, and ultimately, one must understand from one's own experience.

There are some other questions about karma yoga. 'We decide our svdharma and act.' When a karma yogi performs action, there are many values that must be protected. He must protect Truth and Dharma, etc. In the society in which the karma yogi acts, no one is protecting these values. That is another subject.

Generally, the society has no interest in dharma or fairness. The society is based in selfishness. It is Ignorance that impels the society to karma, so that is natural. We cannot expect anything from the society. Why not? The prompting behind the karma of society is desire and Ignorance. A person who thinks away from that is the karma yogi. Thus, the karma yogi doesn't lament over the loss of values in society. This is because the karma yogi knows the secret. 'Only that is possible for society.'

How can these two coincide? The decline of values in society, and values of the karma yogi. How can the karma yogi perform karma in the society, with this conflict? So, it may not be possible for the karma yogi to transform society, and travel his own path. If there is a change, it is in the individual. The society doesn't change. The nature of society will remain.

The society has had the same nature since beginningless time. It's just that the individual changes. That is why Incarnations of God appear from time to time.

In the time in which Rama and Krishna lived, the society was like that. In those days, there were even more evil people and demonic beings. Those who performed terrible deeds were called 'asuras,' demons. So, the general nature of society is not changed in any period of time. All karma yogis have performed karma yoga in this society. Because society is such, the karma yogi cannot become mixed with it. So what does the karma yogi do?

He stays away from the evil of society. He doesn't go into the decline of values in society, and practices karma yoga. Therefore, Shankara says in the Preface to the Bhāṣyā, 'dharmādharmavivekapūrvakam.' 'With discrimination between dharma and adharma, perform karma yoga.' The karma yogi shouldn't know just what dharma is; he must also know what adharma is. Why does one become carried away by adharma sometimes? It is because the person doesn't recognize adharma. So, it's only possible to stay away from adharma if one clearly knows what adharma is.

Therefore, wherever it speaks about karma yoga, it says, 'dharmādharmaviveka pūrvakam.' One must recognize adharma. Then the karma yogi will avoid going to adharma. Otherwise, he will try to perform adharma as karma yoga. That is useless. It's not possible to perform adharma like that. The karma yogi must recognize adharma. Having recognized, he should remain away from it. Staying away from adharma, he can then perform his svadharma in the society.

So, alertness is needed in one's performance of svadharma. This alertness and awareness is necessary in choosing one's svadharma and in its performance. All of this is part of the kauśalam, the dexterity in karma. 'Yogaḥ karmasu kauśalaṁ.'

What is the mental attitude of the karma yogi? It is, 'lokāḥ samastāḥ sukhino bhavantu.' That isn't how the society thinks. In society, there will be all forms of violence; there will be adharma, himsa, everything in society. Another question people ask is, 'should the karma yogi confront that violence? What is his stance in this?'

Because of that, what does the Lord say here? One can even fight in war as karma yoga. This means that war may become inevitable sometimes. Once it comes, it should be performed in the spirit of Yoga. Save the people from the attackers. Here, this isn't a war to attack others. This is to save oneself from attackers.

Thus, in whatever level, whatever stage of karma, the karma yogi must be ready. That is the meaning. It isn't possible to come under the control of attackers. One can't become under the control of unrighteousness. It isn't that one exploits others; one must not come

under the exploitation of others. That is why we said that discrimination is needed in adharmā.

Thus, some people think like that. Sattvic for them, means stupid. They feel the karma yogi is a fool. That's not it. The karma yogi has one-pointedness of mind. Some are fools, who will fall. That's not possible for a person with sattvic intelligence.

Therefore, the karma yogi must be ready in all ways in the field of karma. Only such a person can remain in karma yoga. Therefore, there's no meaning in someone saying, 'I was a karma yogi, so I was exploited.' Otherwise, that will become foolishness. That's not possible.

Through all of this, what happens? 'Yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam.' People have explained this phrase in many different ways. This shloka contains all of these meanings. However, some people don't put any importance into the practice of evenness of intelligence, and mind surrendered to God. However, through these, it becomes complete. When we see all of these commentaries and explanations, we understand the entire meaning only by bringing these together. The karma yogi must have all of this.

Thus, the bhāṣyā says, 'samatvabuddhiḥ īśvarārpitachetas tayā tat kauśalam.' That is kauśalam, the skill in karma, the dexterity in karma. We will discuss the rest later. Now look at the shloka.

**Buddhiyukto jahātiha ubhe sukṛtaduṣkṛte
Tasmād yogāya yujyasva yoga karmasu kauśalam. 2.50.**

AUM AMRITESHVARYAI NAMAH