

Kathopanishad
Shibir 5 Summary
Pravachan 3 (26.8.22)

Please Note: This is an English summary of the pravachan by a seeker, Rimaben Dhanky and has been uploaded here for the benefit of the English reader.

You have to focus within to attain the soul. For that, you should have a restrained mind. With the help of Kathopanishad, Rishis have made us understand the right difference between the mind and intellect. Let us understand what is mind and what is intellect, what is right and what is conflictual. Mind is the faculty for giving rise to various thoughts and options. The function of the mind is such that it is going to be impulsive. Intellect decides on one of the options and sticks to it. When both are adjusted or synchronised, one moves on the beneficial path and attains the welfare of the soul.

However, in reality, there is constant conflict. The intellect listens to satsang and decides to stop smoking or drinking liquor. But the mind says that it will stop everything from 'tomorrow'. It will give you various excuses and become unsteady. It tries to undermine the decisions of the intellect. It will try to explain to the intellect that it is right. If the intellect listens to the mind, they will run after the senses and the intellect will be under the control of the mind.

One has to develop a discerning intellect. The intellect should be knowledgeable, wise, and alert. There is a constant tug of war between the mind and the intellect. The mind has different layers. 1. Conscious mind. 2. Subconscious mind 3. Unconscious mind. The mind has the backup of the subconscious and the unconscious which carry past impressions of lifetimes. Therefore, the intellect has to be alert and skilful. Thus, it should have clarity and confidence to give instructions to the mind.

The mind is ever ready to move toward the senses because the believed source of happiness for the mind is the senses; therefore, the intellect should work instantly. The intellect does not let you consume poison or play with a cobra. To favour the senses is the game of the mind and it is difficult to come out of it. If the mind does not have passions, everything will be done rightly. The mind has the habit of gratifying senses, you need to have a sharp, subtle, intelligent, and discerning intellect

to convince the mind and instruct it. The mind is unsteady and that is beneficial to us, as it can be diverted easily.

There are three kinds of intellect described in Bhagavad Gita.

1. Satvik: The satvik intellect discriminates correctly between beneficial and pleasurable, what one should do and not do, religious-irreligious, permanent and temporary, inanimate and consciousness, impurity and one's pure nature.
2. Rajasik - This intellect either does not understand or misunderstands. It remains confused and deluded.
3. Tamasik - It takes wrong decisions. It does the opposite. Eg. If the driver is deaf, blind, or drunk, accidents will occur.

Thus, no external factors can be blamed. Do not blame any souls, if you want to blame, you should blame the intellect. Your intellect holds the reins and is responsible for your liberation and bondage.

Therefore, the charioteer (intellect) should have proper knowledge of:

1. The destination
2. The route- path
3. The chariot- gross body
4. The horses- five senses
5. The rein - mind

If the charioteer does not know about the above points, you will never reach your destination. The intellect will need the clarity of the reins - mind too. Learn about them from the scriptures, Sadguru, and your own past experience, and your intellect will become skilful. The intellect needs clarity, conviction, confidence, and the capacity to convince the mind. Remember these 5 'C's. Your spiritual practice and your surrender to traverse on the beneficial path are very important factors. There needs to be a beautiful relationship between the mind and intellect.

Eg. There is a father, a mother, and a son in a family. The son has a severely running nose yet asks for ice cream. The father sternly refuses but the mother instead of explaining to the kid compels the father to buy one. Here, the father is the intellect,

the mother is the mind, and the son is the five senses. That is, the mind instead of explaining to the senses compels the intellect to understand.

Do not complain about roads, horses, or any other things. The intellect is responsible for everything. In the conflict for shreya-beneficial and preya - pleasurable, the intellect should always win. Therefore, always make Krishna (preaching of your Guru) your charioteer who can steer the chariot of your life on the beneficial path. This is the right process, the samyak vidhi. Something should change within. Keep the Guru's preaching constantly with you. You should not train, tame, and fight with the senses. Suppressed senses will become perverted and explode. The method is to train the intellect. Purify your beliefs. The senses are servants. You are the master. The master orders. Once you lose in front of your servants/kids, they will start believing they are equals and can be stronger than the master - thereafter, they will keep winning. You have to learn the skill. If you feel that you are not going to win against the servant or the kid, you should not open your mouth on that day, but they should never win.

Don't fight with the senses and sense objects. Make the intellect knowledgeable and skilful; and no matter how the road is, you will not fall into the pit. You may encounter a cow or a dog on the road, but the driver has to be skilful, and ensure there are no punctures even if the road is full of potholes. The intellect must have convincing power, it may go on the path of senses and sense objects, but it will not fall into the pit.

We are all moving towards death. In a life of say 60 years:

20 years go in sleep

20 years in desires, where you feel that you need to explore the world

20 years go in fighting the senses and sense objects.

You have met the Enlightened One, and have developed a love for Him, therefore, now it is time to use the right process.

Shlok 6:

But he who has the right understanding, and has a mind always controlled, his senses are always controllable as the good horses of the charioteer.

We saw in the 5th verse that the non-discerning was ayukt and avijnani. The 6th verse is about the discerning who is vijnanvan and yukt - wise and alert. He is not turned towards sense objects but is focused within. He has not let loose the reins so he will not suffer downfall but will be on the path of the supreme.

Yuktvan means having an integrated, united, co-operating mind. All senses are turned towards the Sadguru. The eyes see the Guru, ears listen to Him, hands work for Him, mouth sings His glory. The intellect has to be sharp and clear.

Your goal should be clear. If the goal is liberation, you know what instructions to give. If the goal is marriage or becoming an Atmarpit, you know what instructions to give.

The intellect should take care of the chariot - the human body, thus its physical health, and the mind, meaning its mental health. One should not overindulge in sensual pleasures or in austerities. When you follow excessive austerities, you may find them boring, or even oppose them. You have to ensure that the mind does not become reactive, depressed, or sad. The intellect has to take care of everything. The reins, chariot, etc. are all the responsibility of the intellect. You cannot blame anyone but the intellect. Therefore, spiritual knowledge is absolutely necessary and unavoidable. That is the reason why Arjun kept Shri Krishna as his charioteer. The intellect has the capacity to:

1. Take the right decision
2. Inform the mind about the decision
3. Convince the mind to be integrated (yukt)
4. Persuade the mind (but not give in - eg. if not vodka, have rum)
5. Joyfully obey the intellect and not indulge in senses.

All this is possible by regular satsang. The mind should be convinced to climb the ladder from happiness derived from sense objects to experience the bliss of the soul.

Shlok 7:

And he who is devoid of proper understanding, thoughtless, and always impure, never attains the goal and gets into the round of births and deaths.

A non-discerning person lives an indiscriminate life

This has been written in the Vedic times. Just imagine how relevant it is for this age, where instead of self-restraint, the world believes in exposure - to explore everything. They feel that restraint means suppression. It is like an unanchored boat. People are slaves of the senses instead of having friendship with the intellect. The non-discerned person lives life like an animal.

Desires are unlimited and the objects in the world are limited, so the mind will always be distracted.

If the mind has distraction, it will either become competitive or it will have arrogance (if it wins). It will become unethical, illegal thoughts come, there is a lot of stress and to release stress alcohol is consumed as it quiets the mind and suppresses the stress temporarily, but does not solve it. Thus, it is always better to go to the intellect.

A non-discerning person ruins his life, takes birth again and again, he is caught in it and continues his transmigration because of suppressed vasnas - desires. He falls in the pit, indulges in irreligious and sinful activities.

There is constant suffering, misery, and struggle. There is a repeated journey from Mumbai to Dharampur and back to Mumbai. But never Mumbai to Dharampur to Moksh! He journeys towards his downfall, and not towards supreme prosperity. If you choose an animal-like existence it will result in birth and rebirth.

Shlok 8 and shlok 9:

But he who is intelligent, ever pure, and with the mind controlled, verily reaches that goal from whence none is born again.

The man who has intelligence for his charioteer and a well-controlled mind as the rein- he attains the end of his journey, that supreme place of Vishnu (the whole pervading atman).

The discerning person transcends the cycle of birth and death. We can see a similarity between the Enlightened Ones. In Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra, there are 6 Pads, the Rishis of the Upanishads also show you the path - as soon as there is a doubt, they all immediately show the next step. They will not let your journey remain incomplete or disappointing. They will show 1,000 faults only to inspire you. It is very easy to come out of them, for there is always the reassurance: 'I am there with you.'

The intellect has grasped the spiritual knowledge and thus there arises the dispassionate intellect. Eg. When you become a Vanprastha, don't ever say it is in your culture or is your Guru's ajna or command to not participate in certain social functions. Discontinue social interactions by your own wish. Your statement would be, "I prefer not to attend a wedding or a birthday party but I shall pray to Param Krupalu Dev for your well-being."

The one who is detached becomes free of mal - impurities, vikshep - distractions, and ajnan - ignorance. He is constantly in a state of soul awareness. He does not remain the slave of his intellect, as his intellect has become satvik. He does not harbour impure thoughts. Either he discontinues transmigration or has very few births left. And even if he is born again it is to help others. He goes back to the same school but does not go there as a student but as a teacher. An omniscient one may run just a coaching class, having a small boat while the Tirthankar Bhagwan may run a school, or an ashram having a big ship or cruise or liner. But their state is the same. They come back to save us.

In this shlok, the metaphor of the chariot is complete. You are all going to be swallowed by death. Let the intellect be wise and alert. Let the mind be focused and obeying. Let the senses be trained and disciplined. Take care of the reins, the chariot, and your emotional and physical health. Make the jivatma- contaminated soul or worldly soul reach the state of Parmatma - supreme soul.

If you live a life of discernment, there is no rebirth for you. You will attain Vishnupad. In Puranas, Vishnu is described as sleeping on Sheshnaag. That is for the beginners to have respect and eulogise God. Upanishad defines Vishnupad as Godliness. That is, you will attain Godliness - the purest, the highest state. The discerning person does not have any more births and deaths.