

Bagawat Geeta, Class 38

Greetings All,

Lord Krishna talked about the importance of karma up to the 7th verse; and now from the 8th verse onwards, up to 20th verse, the Lord is dealing with the important topic of karma yoga. Hence the chapter's name as well. It is a very important chapter of the Gita. In last class I pointed out Karma Yoga has two components to it.

Karma + Yoga= Karma Yoga.

Here Karma is proper action and Yoga is proper attitude.

Proper Action (karma)

Proper action is divided into three types of actions known as Satvic, Rajasic and Tamasic.

In **Satvic** actions there are more beneficiaries. I may also be benefited. It is Selfless action. I give more and take less. In a final accounting I should have given more and taken less. According to the material world, success is, when I can perform minimum action and get maximum money for it. As per Shastras it is the other way around. According to them I should do more and take less. This is what makes it Selfless.

Rajasic Karma is when the other beneficiaries are few. I am concerned about my immediate family and myself. In today's world people do not even care for their old parents anymore. All this makes it selfish.

Tamasic Karma is when I am benefitted and others are not. Others are actually harmed. It is harmful action.

Satvic Karma provides fast benefit. Rajasic provides slow benefit. Tamasic does not provide any benefit. Tamasic person actually falls down spiritually. He may amass wealth by

cheating and other such means, spiritually, however, he will move away from the shastras.

So a Karma Yogi should increase Satvic Karmas, reduce Rajasic Karma and avoid Tamasic Karmas. Satvic Karmas are defined in Shashtra itself as Pancha Maha Yagya's. They **are Proper actions**. They are:

- Deva Yagya: My contribution to Devas.
- Pitra Yagya: My contribution to Forefathers.
- Bramha Yagya: My contribution to scriptures and Guru Parampara.
- Manushya Yagya: My contribution to human beings.
- Bhuta Yagya: My contribution to environment, animals, plants etc.

In Hinduism all plants and animals are worshipped. They are all part of Pancha Maha Yagya. One should lead such a life of contribution. This is proper action.

Proper Attitude (Yoga)

The **second part is proper attitude**. Even the best action will not give benefit if I look down upon the action. (In Tamil :Kadane ne panren or I will do it like repaying a debt, reluctantly). Our attitude must be that every action must be an offering to God. It is called Ishwara Arpana Budhi. This applies to performance of Satvic as well as Rajasic Karmas. Even Rajasic karma performed humbly is uplifting. Thus, we have the saying Daridra narayan. I am not giving to that Daridra but to Daridra Narayan. Similarly we have the expression Nara seva is Narayana seva and Manava seva is Madhava seva.

Even food should be offered to God first and then taken. This is all done to bring about an attitudinal change called Bhavana. Even the mundane task of cleaning a desk, do it as an offering to God. Once I make it an offering to God, I will do it wholeheartedly because I will not do anything inferior for

God. If you do it in this manner, you will do the task well and wholeheartedly, as a Karta.

Whatever I do will produce a consequence. Even if you are doing selfless service in society people will criticize. People will criticize even good work. Whatever be the consequences have a Prasada Budhi; take the good and the bad as a gift from God. This attitude is called Yoga.

With this proper attitude, when I perform every action as an offering to God, I will not worry if it is pleasant or unpleasant. All our actions may not be that pleasant. Swamiji says we do perform unpleasant actions. If I have to take care of my old parent who is not that well, it is a duty. But it may not be pleasant, as it will involve money and inconvenience. Some such person may even pray for the speedy demise of that parent.

For many people going to office is an unpleasant task. Similarly, a housewife also has complaints. Cooking three times, year round, with no entertainment, she may want to dine out, while he may not want to. Arjuna too is faced with an unpleasant task of fighting his own Kith and Kin.

When every action is an offering to God, there is pleasantness in the work. One does not grumble about the work. A karma Yogi works with great enthusiasm. Chinmayananda used to say: Keep smiling at all times".

Prasada Budhi: Whatever the fruits, I accept it with complete grace, without any complaints. Whenever I don't get the expected result we tend to think of God as unjust. Whatever God gives is a just result of Prarabdha Karma. We should keep in mind that results often come from previous lives as well. When a local cricket umpire gives his decision it is accepted without question. If so, why can't you accept the decision of the universal umpire? This includes the decision of death as well. Whatever God gives, accept it. **When I am not able to**

accept it, pray to God to give me the strength to be able to accept it. Budhi in this shloka means attitude.

This attitude gives Samatvam or a balanced mind brought about by a Prasada Budhi.

What is the benefit of Karma Yoga? The main benefit is very fast spiritual progress. This will be evident in self-knowledge. I will easily grasp self-knowledge. It may even provide some material benefit as a bye-product.

Shloka # 8:

कर्मण्येवाङ्मया जगदुत्थयत्यक्षरं ।
ब्रह्मविद्यायां कर्मयोगो धर्मो उच्यते ॥ ३.४॥

“Always do prescribed work; work is superior to inaction. Indeed, even life in the body is impossible without working.”

Action is always superior to inaction. In inaction mind is idle and it becomes the devils workshop. Only a Gyani can remain idle. Citing example of two quiet people who were in an ashram, one felt the ashram was quiet. The other felt it was a like cremation ground. Both people experience quietude differently.

If you resort to inaction, living in the world will be very difficult. Even if you have everything you need, you will still have to act to maintain your body. So, Arjuna, perform action. Perform the actions prescribed in the scriptures. The Pancha Maha Yagya's prescribed are compulsory. You have to contribute to society. It can be through teaching, giving food, giving your time and even smiling at people. Somebody said, “People come from miles to get a smile”.

The Pancha Maha Yagya's can be seen from different angles. It is a commandment from Lord. It is like following a traffic rule. Mature people will follow the law, as it is good for society. Citing JFK “ Don't ask what your country can do for

you, ask what can you do for your country"? Immature person may not follow the law, hence this commandment. If you don't perform the Karmas or omitting your duties you will get special Papam called Prathyavaya Papam and will fall down spiritually. Hence, the language of threat used, by scriptures.

Shloka # 9:

॥ अहो मातृसुत ॥ अहो मातृसुत ॥ अहो मातृसुत ॥ अहो मातृसुत ॥
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" This world is bound by works other than those done as sacrifice. O son of Kunti. Free from attachment, do work as sacrifice."

In previous shloka Sri Krishna said Karma Yoga has to be followed. New research shows fear must not be used with a child. It crimps the mind of the child. In USA a child cannot be beaten. Corporal punishment is considered very bad. It must be used very sparingly. Sri Krishna tells Arjuna, You need not take my commandment in previous shloka as Ishwara Agya (command). I used it for immature persons only. So, Karma Yoga should be converted to Ishwara Yagya or worship of the Lord.

From Ishwara Agya it becomes Ishwara Yagya. In this context the following saying comes to mind, "We have enough for man's need but we do not have enough for man's greed."

So, Karma Yoga is for worship of the Lord. Normally a puja is performed in a short time. Sri Krishna says, you may perform the short puja in the beginning, but ultimately the real puja is to convert your very life into a puja. Let my very living become an offering to you.

Shankara says in Soundarya Lahiri: Oh! Mother, wherever I go, take it as pradakshanam. So also, whatever you are eating, make it an offering to God.

What is Karma Yoga? They say, "Work is worship". I can do worship during puja at home. How can I worship in my office? In Hinduism the whole world is a manifestation of God. Everything is God. You can worship him anywhere.

When work is performed with this attitude our actions will not be binding. There will be no bondage. This worship will lead to liberation.

Why is work the cause of bondage? Our actions create tensions. We wonder whether it will work properly. It results in a state of constant anxiety. We worry if the child will get admission or not? Will I be able to go to America or not? Will I win the contract or not. Every action results in stress.

That is the reason there are so many stress management programs offered today.

By the age of 40 many executives have psychosomatic diseases caused by stress. Some have high blood pressure, some have diabetes and some have high Cholesterol.

Although he has a high salary he cannot even enjoy good food. He cannot take salty food; he cannot eat sweets; he cannot eat sour things because of ulcer; and so on and on. What is the point of all this money if a man cannot enjoy the simple things of life, asks Swamiji.

He says, a man can work and enjoy his life under only one condition. By converting your life into worship and telling yourself that whatever comes is prasada. Only by leading a life of converting work to worship can we lead a stress free work life.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 37

Greetings All,

Shloka # 6:

कर्मणो यो मत्प्रसादादक्षिण्यते
तस्यैव कर्मफलमक्षयम्
कर्मणो यो मत्प्रसादादक्षिण्यते
तस्यैव कर्मफलमक्षयम्
कर्मणो यो मत्प्रसादादक्षिण्यते
तस्यैव कर्मफलमक्षयम्

“ Controlling the organs of action, he who has his mind dwelling on their objects has a confounded mind; he is said to be a hypocrite.”

Continuing his teaching of the Gita, Swami Paramathananda recapped last week's class. In this shloka Sri Krishna is clarifying Arjuna's doubts about Gyana Yoga and Karma Yoga. He says there is no choice between the two. Everybody has to go through karma yoga first which is the only means of purifying the mind and thereafter everyone has to go through gyana yoga, which is the only means of liberation. Gyana yoga means a study of the scriptures under the guidance of a guru. Guru Shashtra Upadesha Sravanam is called Gyana yoga and everyone has to go through it.

Even though there is no choice between these two sadhanas, there is a choice in one's lifestyle. The choice is between Grihastashrama and Sanyasashrama. While there is no choice

between these two sadhanas, Sri Krishna says, there is a choice with regard to the lifestyle that a person chooses. However, there is no uniform answer to this as it depends upon the type of seeker. Sri Krishna, however, observes that Sanyasashrama is a more difficult one to follow. Sanyasa is not for a majority of the people; it suits only a small minority. It is better to continue in Grihasthashrama throughout or after Grihasthashrama take to Sanyasa. He recommends Grihasthashrama to Arjuna as well. He tells him activity is safer than withdrawal.

Sri Krishna gave three reasons in support of Karma Yoga (or not withdrawing from life) in shlokas 4, 5 and 6 respectively. They are:

1. By avoiding Karma, one cannot get peace of mind. If I have no action, I may think I will have peace of mind, however, inaction does not give you peace of mind.
2. Total Inaction is impossible. Based upon one's Gunas, one will perform action. Try staying at an Ashram for a week.

Swamiji then told the story of a Sanyasi in a temple.

In a temple, there was a Sanyasi sitting; without doing anything and he got daily Prasadam from the temple. A new officer took over the administration. He wanted to bring about changes and improvements. He asked how many people got the Prasadam. He got a list of names and at the end of the list was named the "Quiet Swamiji." If he did not do anything, why should the Quiet Swamiji get prasadam, was his question? The people in the temple told the officer the Swamiji was a respected

person and he should at least talk to him. He asked the Quiet Swamiji why he should get Prasadam for doing nothing. The Quiet Swamiji told him: My doing nothing is very good for the society. He said sitting quiet was not very easy and requested the officer to try it at least for a week. The officer thought

it would be very easy and agreed. Once he sat with the Quiet Swamji for some time, he got restless. After a few hours of quiet time he became extremely restless and gave up. He told the Pujari to give the Quiet Swamiji a double quota of Prasadam daily. Giving up action is not easy. Our gunas and svabhava will pressurize us to act.

3) Not only will action not result in moksha but it can also become a risky proposition. When there are no goals or plans in mind, the mind does not have anything to do, especially since he does not have Gyanam. An idle mind is ideal for seeking many types of enjoyments. In one's mind and imagination too one can enjoy a lot. He then violates Sanyasa and the suppressed emotions erupt. Such a person, wearing an ochre robe, declares himself to be a saintly person to the world, while in reality he is caught up in his sense world. This is called "Mithyachara", meaning what I am thinking, the society does not know. Such a person is also called a "Vimudatma" or a hypocrite. So, Arjuna, considering that inaction is dangerous, lead an active life.

Shloka # 7:

[illegible]

“Controlling the sense organs with the mind, he who commences the Yoga of action with the organs of action, unattached, is held to excel, O Arjuna.”

What is an ideal Ashrama? As per Sri Krishna, it is Grihasthashrama, where one can fulfill Artha, Kama as well as perform Service to society. Even a wife is called saha dharma charani, which means one gets married not primarily for fulfilling the Artha Kama desires, but for primarily fulfilling my service to the society. In this process I also fulfill my personal desires in a legitimate manner. And therefore, Sri Krishna says, it is better for one to remain in

society.

What is an ideal life to lead? As a Grihastha, as an active person in society, let him regulate his sense organs first and then fulfill his artha & kama. Artha means security, money, possessions, house, status etc. name, fame all related to security while and Kama means entertainment. Shastras give freedom to fulfill the Artha & Kama desire only in Grihasthasrama and not in Sanyasasrama. Sanyasa is exclusively meant for fulfilling moksha desire only. Therefore Grihastha should fulfill his desires by regulating the sense organs and without violating dharma and morality.

Citing example of pickle, sometimes we forget that pickle is only a side dish and indulge in it as if it were the main dish. So too, in such a life, Dharma should dominate and not Artha and Kama. Giving must be more than receiving. This is a Dharmic Purusha. Sensory excesses should be controlled by a discriminating mind. It does not mean suppression. Shastras are against suppression. Citing example of a river, stopping the flow of a river will not help, it will cause flood. If you don't stop the flow of water, it will be wasted. Therefore the correct thing to do is to regulate the water by channeling it in a useful direction. Swamiji used the Tamil Saying to further inform us. Kan pona pokkile manam pokalama, manam pona pokkile manitan pokalama; (Should the mind follow whatever the eyes see; and should a man follow his wandering mind?)

After this the Grihastha should take to Karma Yoga that too without getting attached to anything. Whatever he uses is only a means. Shastras say Grihasthashrama is not an end in itself. A wife or husband, both are not permanent. I have to grow out of all my attachments, including for my family, before Yama comes. Such a Grihastha excels a Sanyasi who is not mature and is without knowledge. Sanyasa is horrible if you do not know Vedanta.

Shloka # 8:

[illegible]

“Always do prescribed work; work is superior to inaction. Indeed, even life in the body is impossible without working.”

In the previous shloka Sri Krishna says Karma Yoga is the best path. However shastras do make an exception for one to skip Karma (Grihastha) and go to Gyana Yoga (Sanyasa). The exception occurs when a person has performed Karma Yoga in a previous life.

In this shloka Sri Krishna talks about what is Karma Yoga. In the two slokas, 47 and 48 of the 2nd chapter, Sri Krishna did summarize karma yoga. Now from shlokas 8 to 20 Sri Krishna is describing Karma Yoga. It should be noted that Sri Krishna's teachings are all based upon Vedas. He is presenting it in a more modern form. The content is still the same. In Vedas, in Karma Kanda, Ishavasa and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads, all talk about Karma Yoga. In general karma Yoga can be defined as:

Karma +Yoga=Karma Yoga
Karma here means proper action.

Yoga here means proper attitude towards the action and the result of the action, both respectively.

What is proper action? Actions are of three types. They are Satvic, Tamasic and Rajasic.

Satvic: action is one in which more numbers of people get the benefit. It can include me as well. Example would be a businessman who gets profits but shares it with society. This is also called Nishkama Karma or Self less service.

Rajasic: action is one where beneficiaries are minimum. It is

primarily focused on my near family and me.

Tamasic: action is one that is harmful. I hurt others for my benefit. I do not consider others. In India, a blaring mike is often encountered where there is no consideration of the people around. Any action that disturbs is Tamasic.

Karma Yoga should be primarily Satvic and Nishkama Karma. Shastras prescribe some of these Nishkama Karmas. They are known as Pancha Maha Yagna's. Performing the Pancha Maha Yagna makes our spiritual progress very fast. They purify one's mind. They reduce one's Raga, Dvesha, Kama and Krodha. The Pancha Maha Yagna's are:

1. Deva Puja: Life should consist of religious activity or worship. This may depend upon your Jathi, Varna etc. Sandhyavandanam, Rama Nama Japam all fall into this category. This is dedicating exclusive time for Devas. It is treating Devas as guests. It can also be called prayer time.
2. Pithru Puja: Worship of forefathers. Scriptures give great importance to this puja. Some time should be allocated for this. The ancestor worship can be as per family tradition.
3. Rishi or Brahma Yagna: This is the worship of scriptures. We have a glorious tradition. We have to do something to preserve it and propagate it. Daily Parayanam or study of scripture such as Ramayanam falls under this yagna. Our Gita class is a part of Brahma Yagna. We are also responsible for handing over these teachings to posterity. We should share it with children through daily study. There are ritualistic ways of performing Brahma Yagna as well. In this process we also remember the Rishi Parampara (all Rishi's) who have brought down to this day the knowledge of our scriptures for our benefit.
4. Manushya Yagna: All types of social services fall under this Yagna. Feeding the poor, giving time to orphanages,

giving time to old age homes, schools, etc., all fall under this Yagna. Feeding hungry is the primary Manushya Yagna also called Anna Danam.

5. Bhoota Yagna: This is protection of the environment and all other beings such as animals, plants, the water, air and the earth. This is the reason our scriptures show the animals as Vahanas of Devas. The story of Shakunthala makes the message clearer. Shakuntala, when she had to leave the ashrama of Rishi Kanva, she takes leave of all people, the plants, and even the deer. One particular deer was very dear to her. It pulled her dress, not allowing her to leave. Even the trees bowed their head down. Shakuntala had won the hearts of all by her service.

All these five mahayagnas are compulsory. One who leads such a life is a very blessed person.

Take away from this class:

Please consider incorporating Pancha Maha Yagna practices in your daily life. Swamiji says they will transform you spiritually.

With Best wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 36

Shloka # 3:

“The blessed Lord Said:

O Sinless One! Two kinds of disciplines in this world were set forth by Me of yore-for Samkhyas the disciple of knowledge ,

and for the Yogins, that of works.”

Recapping shloka # 3, Swami Parmarthananda, said, after listening to teachings in chapter 2, Arjuna now has questions about the roles Karma Yoga and Gyana Yoga. He thinks there is a choice between the two. This is a mistake. Sri Krishna at no point presented them as optional. All scriptures agree that Gyanam alone can liberate. So there is no choice. All have to go through Gyanam. Before going to Gyanam one has to be qualified for it. This can be done through Karma Yoga. Everybody has to prepare their mind and only then can they go to Gyana Yoga. So there is no choice, both are essential. One prepares the mind and the other removes ignorance. Arjuna did not understand this, hence his question. Sri Krishna wanted Arjuna to fully understand this requirement of scriptures. Here Sri Krishna introduces the concepts of Sadhana and Life style (also called Nishta). Everybody requires both of them. The lifestyles indicated are:

- 1) Pravriti Marga and
- 2) Nivritimarga

Pravriti marga is Grihastashrama and Nivriti marga is Sanyasa or Gyanashrama.

Swamiji says there are three possible lifestyles for human beings. They are:

1. Grihastashrama followed by Sanyasashrama. Karma , such as money, people etc. One uses these to lead an active life of service and in this process removes the sharp edges of mind. It removes the sharp edges of the personality like kamaḥ, krodhaḥ, lobhaḥ, mohaḥ, etc. This is just like a knife sharpened by a rough surface. After Grihastashrama one goes to Sanyasashrama. This stage is to acquire knowledge. Here the person is free of responsibilities. He should not possess anything. Yoga (acquisition) and Kshema (preservation) are both, burdens. He has to shave his head

or grow his hair. Grihastha's duties are prescribed, as are different ones for a Sanyasi. For a grihastha, parayanam is rudram, chamakam, sukthani, etc.; for a sanyasi daily parayanam is upaniṣhad, brahma sutras, bhaṣyam, etc. Even his (Sanyasi's) daily karmas are designed for the pursuit of Gyana yoga; and therefore Gyanam does not require any expenditure. However, Karma does require expenditure. This life style is considered the ideal one.

2. Grihasthashrama followed by a continuation in Grihasthashrama. One performs Karma yoga and then gradually moves to Gyana yoga, all within Grihasthashrama. This life style is a little more difficult but can be managed. In this life style, the Gyanam stage can occasionally be disturbed because of the life of a grihastha. This is just like a knife can occasionally be a screwdriver and a screwdriver too can occasionally be used for cutting. So this life style is strictly Grihasthashrama only.
3. In this third life style one skips Grihasthashrama to Sanyasa. Here the hope of purifying the mind is difficult. Here too one can manage with some difficulty. Here one performs Karma through Japas and service to his Guru. This is strictly Sanyasashrama. It is least favored of all life styles.

The first lifestyle is best and second one is also acceptable. So Arjuna, continue in the Grihasthashrama.

Clarification of some words used in the shloka 3:

Pura means- through the vedas, from past. It is said The Lord created Brahma. The Lord created the world and brought out Brahma from his navel, and at the same time gave the Vedic teaching as well. And that is reason Brahmaji has four heads representing the four Vedas.

Anadh: means the pure one or Arjuna.

Samkhya: means Sanyasi

So pure minded Arjuna, these two lifestyles I have introduced among the human beings; the animals do not have four ashramas; they do not have any problem. Only the human beings have these two main ashramas, Grihastha and Sanyasa.

Explaining further, a Sanyasi is supposed to remove his scared thread and give up Gayathri mantra. He now goes to Omkara Mantra. Swamiji explained the Om (A U M) is a shortened version of the Gayathri mantra.

Gayathri has got three lines; each line is simplified into one letter. Tatsavithurvarenyam is simplified into A; bhargodevasya dhimahi is simplified into U, dhiyo yona prachodayat is simplified into uM; A plus U plus uM is AUM or OM.

A Sanyasi should not worry about earning. He was to be dedicated to seeking knowledge and well being of society. In turn, society was supposed to provide for him.

Nivriti: Pursuit of knowledge.

Yoginaha: means extroverted people not committed to knowledge. Karma Yoga and Sadhanas such as Pancha Maha Yagna govern such active people.

Swamiji will explain Pancha Maha Yagna in a future class.

Shloka # 4:

"Man does not achieve freedom from works by abstention from them. None attains perfection through the mere renunciation of works, either."

Whatever life style one adopts one has to go through Karma Yoga and then study the scriptures in a systematic manner under a Guru.

In this shloka Sri Krishna tells Arjuna, you should not avoid action. He gives three reasons for this:

Reason # 1: By avoiding or giving up action, you cannot get Moksha. You cannot move away from duties. Running away from problems does not solve it. Our true problem is internal, although we think it lies outside us.

In this Shloka Naishkaryam and Sidhi both mean Moksha.

In scriptures there are statements that say that by giving up Karma one can get liberation. Sri Krishna clarifies that wherever it says renouncing Karma will get liberation, it should also state that Gyanam should support Karma. Sanyasa works only when it is backed by scriptural studies.

Explaining what scriptural studies mean, Swamiji said, in his ashrama when they were studying the bhashyam, some of the Shankaracharya's bhashya was so deep, it took 15 continuous days of studies to complete one mantra.

By mere renunciation, wearing an Ochre robe, one cannot get Moksha. Sanyasa does not guarantee Moksha.

Shloka # 5:

"None indeed , even for a moment , remains without doing work. All, being dependent, are made to work by the constituents of Prakrti."

Reason #2: Giving his second reason for not giving up action, Sri Krishna says, it is impossible to give up action. Everybody will be forced to perform some action based upon his nature. A man cannot give up physical action and even if one does so, your mind will become active. This is because everyone's prakrithi causes him or her to act. Maya has three Gunas that pervade creation. The ornament will reflect the type of gold it is made up of. Thus, we have gold with more silver, lead and copper that reflects in the ornament. Traits of Karanam (cause) will be there in the effect as well. Parents are evident in their children. The three Gunas, Satva, Rajas and Tamas are present in different proportions in each one of us. The human

being is helpless. The most you can do is channelize these energies. People try to stop thought in meditation; Swamiji says this is a mistake. Vedic meditation is more into directing your mind rather than stopping thought. Any type of meditation that we prescribe involves the appropriate thought. And therefore Sri Krishna says that if you try to give up your action, wherever you go, you will start fresh action. If you become a sanyasi and go to Rishikesh and if you are a rajasic person, your leadership qualities will exert and you will form a sanyasi association. So, even if you renounce action, you will still find action. So, Arjuna, please do what you have to.

Shloka # 6:

“Controlling the organs of action, he who lets his mind dwell on their objects has a confounded mind; he is said to be a hypocrite.”

Reason # 3: The third argument offered by Sri Krishna is that giving up action is very risky and can be counter productive. One can go to Vedanta only after purifying worldly desires. Everybody has got certain natural needs; so they talk about the hierarchy of needs; first the need is for survival; then food and clothing; and thereafter the need is for entertainment; thereafter the need is to be wanted; I want to love someone and I want to be loved by someone. Human mind has different levels of needs including needs for self-respect, doing something in the society, so that the society will remember me.

A person has to go through them and accomplish some self-respect, as they say, to let the ego ripen.

The ego has to ripen before it falls. This can happen only in society and through family life. Sanyasa Marga is a one-way traffic. A grihastha can become a sanyasi; but a sanyasi cannot become a grihastha. That is why Dayananda Swamiji used to tell us; when he went to Uttarakashi, he met many sadhus,

sanyasis and he was talking with them. During discussions, Swamiji said: I want to take sanyasa. Many of those sanyasis told him: Do not take that decision. One of them said: You know, somehow after a fight with my wife, I left and took up sanyasa, because one day my early morning coffee was delayed. And now here, on the first day, Himalayas and Ganges were wonderful and fine and I thought this is the best place to stay for life; but on second day, third day, fourth day, it was the same Ganga, same Himalayas, and if you ask for bhikṣha, the bhikṣha would also be the same; unlike in my house, where it was different every day. Here, you will have have no choice.

A Grihastha cannot become a Brahmachari. If ego has not matured it can miss a lot. If mind is not ready for Sanyasa, it can misfire. It can become a life of Mithyachara. Pressure mounts in mind for pleasures. So it is risky to skip and go to Sanyasashrama.

Take away:

1. It is only by going through life's ups, downs and travails that eventually our ego will ripen and hopefully fall off. Running away from life will not help.
 2. Even if you run away, as Swamiji points out, the grass is not greener on the other side. Sanyasa may not help.
- With Best Wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy
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Bagawat Geeta, Class 35

Shloka # 1:

Arjuna Said:

“O Krsna! If your view is that knowledge is superior to work, why do you bid me to undertake this fearful work of war?”

Starting the teaching of chapter 3 Swami Paramathanada said, this chapter begins with a question from Arjuna. Arjuna is confused about the teaching in chapter 2. In chapter 2, Sri Krishna, at different times, said: “wise people do not grieve in life”, “Wisdom alone is solution for all grief” and “Ignorance is cause of all sorrow and knowledge frees one from all sorrow”. At the end of chapter 2 Sri Krishna emphasizes Gyana Yoga in the Sthitha Pragyaha. Sri Krishna talked a lot about Gyanam and Gyani. At the end of the chapter 2 he says, a Gyani will not have delusion in life.

In chapter 1, Arjuna's primary problems were diagnosed as sorrow and internal conflict. In chapter 2, Sri Krishna says Gyanam is the solution for all sorrows and internal conflicts. Gyanam can be obtained only from a Guru or a Gurukulam. In Chapter 2, in its middle, Sri Krishna talks a lot about Karma, while in beginning and end he talks of a lot about Gyanam. Here, he advised Arjuna to perform Karma. Arjuna's question is, should I follow the path Gyana Yoga or the Karma Yoga? Arjuna is naturally inclined towards Karma. In this instance, however, he is looking for an escape. Normally, being a Kshatriya he is inclined to fight, however, in front of Bhishma, Drona and Other relatives he does not want to fight. Even as he wants to run away from the battlefield he also remembers Sri Krishna's teaching that he should stand up and fight as it is Dharma. He now blames Sri Krishna rather than himself, saying you are confusing me. Having glorified Gyanam, O Krishna, you are asking me to perform the Karma of battle.

Sri Krishna has not confused Arjuna. His confusion is due to

his own improper understanding. Swamiji says it is not unusual that this question, if Karma Yoga is better than Gyana Yoga, often comes up. People even ask this about Bhakthi, Raja and Kundalini Yoga's as well. Karma Yoga should not be compared to Gyana Yoga. Comparison is possible only when there are options. Both Karma and Gyana are not optional. Both are equally important for a person. Karma yoga makes you fit for Gyana Yoga. Karma purifies your mind. Arjuna was asked to perform Karma to purify his mind and then gain knowledge. Unfortunately Arjuna has been taking in Sri Krishna's teaching through a filter. He basically wants to avoid Karma.

Sri Krishna, in his greatness, does not blame Arjuna for this confusion. He answers the question with great elation on the topic of Karma Yoga.

Swamiji clarified that in Sanskrit one word can have many meanings depending on its context. Thus, the word Budhi can mean: Object of knowledge, instrument of knowledge and Knowledge itself. In this shloka it means Knowledge itself.

Arjuna's question is after asking me to obtain knowledge you are now asking me to perform action knowing that the action cannot produce new knowledge. Karma cannot produce any new knowledge, that too when the action is unpleasant (terrible). In this instance it even involves blood. We know that certain actions are unpleasant and certain actions are pleasant. For Arjuna if it were a pleasant action, it would have been fine. But you are engaging me in bloody action that too one involved with killing. Even as he was seeing his dear Bhishma and dear Droṇa standing the thought of killing them was too revolting.

Shloka # 2:

Arjuna Said:

"By words that seem confused, You bewilder my intelligence, as it were. Therefore set forth one sure course by which I may attain the highest good."

Arjuna says: Sri Krishna, you are using confusing statements or at least to me it appears so. Looks like I have not grasped your teaching properly. Please clarify.

Swamiji says, Vedanta emphasizes thinking. Blind acceptance is not advocated. Thus Bramhasutra is a logical analysis of scriptures. The process of preaching is initial and superficial, while teaching is for long term and it brings value to you. Through teaching alone internal transformation occurs.

Shloka # 3:

Sri Krishna Said:

“O sinless one! Two kinds of disciplines in this world were set forth by Me in times of yore-for the Samkhyas the discipline of knowledge and for the Yogins, that of works.”

Swamiji says Swami Dayanada Saraswathi used to say: “Value is a value only when the value of the value is valued.” Teaching conveys value of the value. Preaching only conveys the value. Example of this would be answering why Karma Yoga should be performed before Gyana Yoga.

Here too Sri Krishna is teaching Arjuna; He is not telling him to go and fight rather he is teaching him why karma is important. Sri Krishna now explains why Karma Yoga is important. This third shloka is an important one and is the foundation of chapter 3.

Scriptures point out that Karma Yoga Sadhana and Gyana Yoga Sadhana are both compulsory. It is like washing hand before eating. You clean your hand and then eat.

Karma Yoga makes you Gyana Yogyatha Prapthihi. Gyana Yoga has always been presented in scriptures at the end, not the beginning or the middle. There are of course exceptions. Ninety-nine percent of people are not prepared for Gyanam. Ramana Maharishi was an exception. What worked for Ramana does not work for all. As per Shastras people like Ramana Maharishi

also have gone through Karma Yoga, probably in some previous life. Once you have prepared, you can go through Gyana Yoga as well.

Paralleling this, scriptures also talk of two types of lifestyles called Ashramas. The word Nishta means Ashrama or lifestyle. Scriptures mention four ashramas. Of the four, Grihastha Ashram and Sanyasa Ashram are pertinent here.

Pravrithi Nishta: It is Karma Pradhana Ashram

Nivriithi Nishta: It is Gyana Pradhana Ashram.

Note: The word Samkhya in the shloka is associated with Gyanam.

Swamiji says a human being can lead life in three different ways. They are:

1. Go to Grihasthashrama, follow Karma Yoga, purify, then take up Sanyasa Yoga and become free.
2. Go to Grihasthashrama follow Karma Yoga, purify, continue in Grihasthashrama and gradually change to Gyana Yoga and become free. Such a person is called Grihastha Gyani.
3. Without Grihasthashrama go to Sanyasa. In Sanyasa perform Karma Yoga unique to Sanyasi's. A Sanyasi can perform Japas, Guru Seva, and other such exclusive activities identified for them. After purification he has to go to Gyana Yoga and attain freedom. Such a person is called a Sanyasi Gyani.

Both Sadhanas have to be completed. Citing an example: Screwdriver is used for screwing and a knife is used for cutting. You can cut fruits with a screwdriver as well while a knife can also occasionally screw.

Thus:

- Grihasthashrama is Karma Pradhana.

- Sanyasashrama is Gyana Pradhana.

Therefore Arjuna, do your duty. Right now your duty is to fight.

With Best Wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 34 – Chapter 2 Summary

Swamiji offered a summary of chapter 2. The chapter is divided into four parts:

1. Shlokas 1-10: Arjuna's Sharanagati
2. Shlokas 11-38: Gyana Yoga Part
3. Shlokas 39-58: Karma Yoga Part
4. Shlokas 54-72: Sthita Pragyaha Part

He summarized each topic.

Shlokas 1-10, Arjuna Sharanagati.

This was a continuity of chapter 1 where Arjuna discovered the problems of Samsara in the oddest place, the battlefield. Raga, Shoka and Moha are the problems associated with Samsara. Raga is attachment, a human problem and while it varies from individual to individual, it is also a universal problem. Arjuna discovers it with intensity in the battlefield. With attachment comes sorrow or Vishadha. I don't want to lose anything I am attached to. Any loss, actual or imaginary, I am not able to withstand. Arjuna was intensely attached to Bhishma, Drona and others. He is unable to handle even the imaginary loss of these people close to him and this is called Shokaha. Once the mind is

caught in Raga and Shoka it loses its capacity to discriminate between Dharma and Adharma. Incapacity to decide what is the right course of action in a given situation sets in. This lack of capacity to discriminate is called Mohaha. Thus Raga, Shoka and Moha together are known as Samsara. Arjuna discovers this problem and also tries to solve it. Arjuna even gives Sri Krishna a lecture on his solution to the problem. He feels fighting is Adharma and wants to run away from the battlefield. Sri Krishna allows Arjuna to express himself.

In chapter 2 Arjuna's dilemma is continued. He has not yet surrendered himself to Sri Krishna as such Sri Krishna keeps quiet. Then, Arjuna feels Karpanya Dosha, feeling helplessness and only then surrenders to Sri Krishna. He is like a drowning person who finds Sri Krishna to hold on to. The surrender has to be real and from the heart. Arjuna has to empty his mind in this process so that Sri Krishna can fill it up with wisdom. A Sanyasi shaving his head is a symbol of removing one's false notions. Arjuna, the Yajamana, now becomes Arjuna, the Shishya. Sri Krishna also changes roles from the Partha Sarthy to Gita Upadesha Jagat Guru. Gyani becomes a Guru because of his Shishya; hence Shashtanga namaskaram is practiced. It shows emptiness of his mind and his humility. An arrogant intellect will find it extremely difficult to do namaskara and Arjuna is the most arrogant person in the world because he is a Kshatriya, a Dhananjaya with many names, glories, wealth, position and beauty and wives; Arjuna is such a person but he surrenders. So, Arjuna now asked for knowledge.

Shlokas 11-38: Gyana Yoga

From these shlokas the Gita teaching now starts. This is the main theme of chapter 2. Shlokas 11-25 are very important as they convey the essence of Upanishads. Gyana Yoga or Samkhya Yoga is the theme. The gist of these shlokas is that Sri Krishna discusses the nature of the individual. Who am I, is being discussed. Unfortunately, we do not have a clear

understanding of ourselves. While we study many things, we never study ourselves. Sri Krishna shows we are not the physical body. This is our biggest misconception. The second mistake we make is thinking "I am the mind". This body is only a temporary dress that we discard at death. Even in deep sleep we still exist but don't function through the physical body. At that time the body and mind are set aside. They are like one's spectacles (glasses) that are removed before going to bed. So, if I am not the body or the mind, then who am I? I am the consciousness principle, Chaitanyam. What is this consciousness? Describing it, Sri Krishna says:

1. It is not part of body, nor product of body and not even a property of the body.
2. It is the independent identity that permeates and enlivens this body.
3. Its capacity to permeate, enliven and illuminate is not limited to just one body.
4. Its capacity extends beyond the boundaries of this body and it continues to exist even after the body collapses.

Explaining the Consciousness principle with an example, Swamiji says:

1. The light you experience on your hand is not part of the hand.
2. It is not limited to the hand or by the hand.
3. The light survives even after the hand disappears. The only difference is that when the hand is there; light is visible; and when the hand is removed; light continues but you are not able to see it.

This consciousness is called the Atma. Sri Krishna describes the six main features of the Atma:

1. Atma is Nityaha or eternal.
2. Atma is Satyaha, or it is reality that exists independently, while everything else depends on Atma.

3. Atma is Sarvagathaha or it is all pervading. In body, it is contactable, when it is outside body, it is invisible.
4. Atma is Aprameya or it is ever the Experiencer and never the Experienced. Anything experienced is Anatma. Atma is the Subject and not the object. Every photo proves the existence of the camera although the camera is not visible in any picture.
5. Atma is Akarta and Abhokta. Atma does not do anything; as such it does not reap the results of any action. It is neither the Doer nor Enjoyer.

Atma is Nirvikaraha, meaning, free from all modifications of existence such as birth, growth, change, decay and death.

Sri Krishna asks Arjuna to recognize and claim this Atma as himself. Body and mind are incidental instruments, a gift from God. During sleep they are taken away temporarily. Later it will be taken away permanently. Knowing this truth claim the Atma as myself, says Sri Krishna. This is the permanent remedy to all life's problems.

Shloka 39-58: Karma Yoga:

Atma is the subtlest and most difficult topic to comprehend unless one has a prepared mind. Sri Krishna wants to help people who have difficulty grasping Gyana Yoga. To them he recommends getting Gyana Yogyata through Karma Yoga. Swamiji compares it to a tutorial class. Essence of Karma Yoga is:

Proper Action+Proper Attitude=Karma Yoga

Proper action: Actions are of three types. Satvic, Rajasic and Tamasic.

Satvic action is considered the best type of action. It is an action where beneficiaries are more. This is Nishkama Karma. In performing such an action I take into account my family, village, society, world and environment. It is self less action.

Rajasic action is selfish action. I do not bother about society or world. The attitude that God will take care of it (when somebody is helpless) also comes in and it is thus fatalistic as well.

Tamasic action is when I benefit at the cost of others or society even causing harm in this process. It is a very selfish approach to action.

Proper Attitude: Whatever action I perform I should do it with love and sincerity, otherwise it is an insult to that action. Enjoy what you do. Learn to love the action. Even actions we do not like, we can learn to love them. Even the most menial action, do it well without worry for appreciation or reward. If I am doing it, I should do it properly. Do it as an offering to God. Every action, perform it as Ishwara Arpanam. Whatever be the consequences of my action (good or bad) take it as a prasada. This is karma Yoga.

Discussing benefits of Karma Yoga, Sri Krishna, says it is not a means for liberation. It, however, gives Gyana Yoga Yogyata Prapthihi. It gives the seeker the Sadhana Chatusthaya Sampathihi.

Shloka 54-72: Describes the Sthita Pragyaha.

He is one who has gone through Karma Yoga and Gyana Yoga. He is one who knows he is the Atma. He has assimilated the knowledge and converted it to emotional strength. Pragyaha is one who has the intellectual knowledge. Sthitha Pragyaha is one who has converted the knowledge to emotional strength. Sri Krishna discusses the following two topics related to Sthitha Pragyaha.

1. How to become a Sthitha Pragyaha or Sthitha Pragy Lakshanani and
2. How to convert this knowledge to emotional strength or Sthitha Pragy Sadhanani

By Sravanam and Mananam with the help of a Guru one can convert the Agyaha to Pragyaha. Now the pupil has to work at converting from Pragyaha to Sthitha Pragyaha. Here Guru cannot help; it is a lonely journey.

So how does one convert the knowledge to emotional strength? What are the tools or Sadhanani available?

The three mental exercises, Sadhanaini, prescribed by Sri Krishna are:

1. Indriya Nigraha: Mastering the senses. Without this you have no control on what enters your mind. Without it your mind will be disturbed and cannot assimilate the teaching. Swamiji clarifies that suppression of senses is not a tool to be used.
2. Mano Nigraha: Thought discipline. Many thoughts just come into us without asking and we have no control on them. Even with sense control thoughts do get in. Sri Krishna says, do not worry about arrival of thoughts, but once it comes in do not perpetuate them. Curb them at their source, especially the unhealthy one's.
3. Nidhidhyasanam: Dwelling on the teaching. Reading, listening, sharing the teaching with others are methods of Nidhidhyasanam. Through this process the teaching gets assimilated. Thus, one becomes a Sthitha Pragyaha.

Sthitha Pragyaha Lakshanani: What are the traits of a Sthitha Pragyaha? They are:

1. Freedom from binding desires. I have only preferences, I can also do without them. I am also accepting of success or failure. All bindings are gone. Non-binding desires are harmless. and this is because of my self-sufficiency also known as purṇatvam. I do not miss anything in life.
2. The second important trait of this assimilation is Samatvam or equanimity of mind, which means freedom from

ragaha, bhayaha, krodhaha, etc. The turbulences caused by anger, fear, jealousy do not come to me.

Sri Krishna gives the example the ocean. Just as the ocean is ever full, irrespective of rain and irrespective of rivers merging into the ocean, so also is the Gyani. Therefore, purnatvam and samatvam are the main traits of a Sthita Pragyaha. And Sri Krishna concludes the chapter by saying that this Sthitha Pragyaha is a free bird, both in life and in death. Wherever he goes he never faces any conflict. He enjoys freedom while living; he enjoys freedom after death, both as jivan muktih and videha mukthi.

With best wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 33

Greetings All,

Continuing his talks, Swamiji reminded us that we are in the final portion of Chapter 2 discussing the topic of Sthita Pragyaha. He is one who has acquired self-knowledge and converted it to emotional strength. Talking about the Sthita Pragyaha, Sri Krishna presents the following two topics:

1. Sthita Pragyaha Sadhanani that tells us how to become a Sthita Pragyaha and
2. Sthita Pragyaha Lakshanani that describes the traits of a Gyani.

Shlokas 55-57 describes Lakshanani while Shlokas 58-68 describes Sadhanaini. Now in Shloka # 69, Sri Krishna is back again talking about Lakshanani. A Sadhaka is one who is in process of transformation while a Sidha is one who has been

transformed. Shlokas 69-72 are about Lakshmananani.

Shloka # 69:

The restrained ascetic (the sage) is awake in what is night for all living beings, while, when these latter are awake, it is night for the silent sage who perceives.

All these shlokas are important ones. Shlokas 69 and 70 are especially important ones that glorify the Sthita Pragya. In this shloka the Gyani is compared to an Agyani. The idea being conveyed is that both Gyani and Agyani face the same world. World cannot be changed. Vedanta does not attempt at changing the people or the world. It is very difficult to bring about such a change. What Vedanta does try is to change one's response to the world. Vedanta tries seeing this corrupt world in a somewhat different light.

Even a Gyani has Prarabdha karma, although he avoids Sanchita and Agami Karmas. So, if both live in such a world, what is the difference in their respective responses to the world? Giving an example, Swamiji says, it is like two people sitting on the seashore and watching the waves. They both see the same waves. However, one person knows the truth of the wave, that it is water. The wave itself is just a name and a form. He focuses on the immortal water (Advaita) and not the perishable Wave. The other person, in the meanwhile, does not know this truth and is caught up in the name and form of the wave. He is, thus, immersed in the mortal wave.

Thus:

One person sees the Dvaita Anitya Tarangani

While the other person sees the Advaita Nitya Jalam.

Because of this perspective the ignorant person feels happy when the wave rises and feels unhappy when the wave subsides.

The Gyani sees birth and death belong to name and form only. There is neither elation nor depression over the rise and fall

of a wave.

Another example cited was that of a movie. At the start of the movie it is just a white screen. Once movie starts I am absorbed in the superficial characters on the screen. I lose sight of the truth, which is the white screen. I feel the shadows on the screen are real. We get absorbed in the movie. The reality is that there is no hero or villain, it is all make believe. One who knows the truth understands that the white screen is the truth. Such a person is not carried away by the images projected on the screen.

Therefore:

Advaita Drishthi belongs to a Gyani. Dvaita Drishthi belongs to an Agyani. One who has the advaita knowledge is free from joys and sorrows of this samsara.

In shloka # 69 Sri Krishna now provides another example. An ignorant person is compared to an owl that keeps awake in the night and the nightlife while the Gyani is compared to a human being.

Daytime is compared to Advaita while nighttime is compared to Dvaita. The human being, the Gyani, is awake to the day or to Advaitam and asleep to the night that is Dvaitam. An owl, considered an Agyani, is asleep to the day, that is Advaitam, while he is awake to the night that is Dvaitam. In the shloka: Ya means Advaita, Nisha means asleep to and Samyami means Gyani.

Swamiji also gave example of a wooden elephant that was wrongly identified by a person as a real elephant. Once he was taken close to it, by a wise man, he realized it was only a wooden elephant. He lost his fear for that elephant. The world is a frightening place to an Agyani, full of troubles. For a wise man, it is a harmless place or Sarvam Shivamayam.

Shloka # 70:

“He wins peace into whose mind objects of desires enter as

waters flow into a full and stable sea that is being filled; and not he who yearns after objects of desire.”

In this shloka Sri Krishna provides another example. Swamiji says, Vyasa muni when he dictated the Mahabharata to Lord Ganesha, Ganesha’s condition to him was that, Vyasa had to tell the story without stopping. Vyasa’s request, in turn to Lord Ganesha was that, even as he wrote them, he understood the shloka’s as well. This way, Vyasa was trying to get some time to think. To gain time, Vyasa would once in a while compose a shloka that was difficult to understand. They were known as Granthi shlokas or knotty shlokas. Shloka # 70 is one such knotty shloka.

In this shloka a Gyani is compared to an ocean. What is the glory of the ocean? It is ever full and independently full. It does not depend on any external factor. The ocean knows the rivers depend upon it for water. The ocean is also not easily polluted. Similarly the Gyani’s mind is ever full (and not of samsara). Agyani’s mind is never full and it is dependent on external factors. A Gyani is Samaha (equanimous) in all conditions. The Gyani’s mind is like an ocean. Even though pollution enters the mind it is always calm and poised.

Shloka 71:

“The man who, giving up all objects of desires, moves about seeking nothing, and rid of all sense of “mine” and “I”, wins peace.”

Sri Krishna continues his description of the Gyani’s state of mind. He is one who enjoys a poised mind. Swamiji says we have a poised mind when it comes to our neighbors as we can look at them dispassionately. He suggests we should also look at ourselves in the same dispassionate manner. This poised state of mind comes and goes in us. In a Gyani, however, his poise is always maintained.

Gyani does not depend on any external factors. Swamiji says divorce is big issue in India as relationship depends on the other person. If another person does not like me, I am affected. Gyani, however, has love for others without seeking their love in return. He does not have body identification. I may love my body, however the reality is that one day, nature will take it away from me. Gyani remembers that: I am not the body and nothing belongs to me. He thus enjoys life thoroughly.

Shloka 72:

“This status of Brahman, Arjuna!; attaining it, none gets deluded (any more). Abiding in it, at least at the hour of death, one gains super-consciousness in Brahman.”

Sri Krishna says this state of mind, of a Sthita Pragyaha, is born out of Vedanta Gyanam. Shlokas 12 through 25 are important ones. We need to read them again and again. Based on this state of mind one obtains the Brahmi state. Once he reaches this state of mind he cannot fall back into the state of mental conflicts. He is in this state until his Prarabhdham. Then he will attain Videhi Mukti meaning freedom from the cycle of birth and death. At that time all three bodies (Karana, Sthula and Sukshma sharira) of his merge into totality.

This knowledge, once it is obtained at any time in life, will get you moksha.

This is the conclusion of chapter 2.

With best wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 32

Greetings All,

Continuing his talk, Swamiji reminded us that Arjuna wanted to know about Sthita Pragyaha. Sthita Pragyaha is one who has acquired Self Knowledge. Sri Krishna deals with the topic in two parts.

1. Traits of Sthita Pragyaha or lakshanani and
2. How to become Sthita Pragyaha or the Sadhanani.

Natural traits of sthitha pragyaha were pointed out in previous class as:

1. One who is happy with himself.
2. He does not depend upon any external condition for happiness.
3. He maintains equanimity in all situations
4. He is free from attachment, fear and anger.

Now, discussing how to become a Sthitha Pragyaha, the first step is to become a pragyaha. A Pragyaha is one who has received self-knowledge. This is obtained by listening to Vedanta Sravanam. Then he has to eliminate all doubts about the knowledge. Swamiji says doubtful knowledge is as good as ignorance. Elimination of doubts is obtained by self-reflection or asking the Acharya. This sravanam and mananam will make me a Pragyaha.

It is the emotional mind that faces the situation and I am not always able to handle it. A transformation in the emotional personality has to occur. A cognitive change (also called intellectual change) to emotional strength to remain balanced at all times has to occur. Attachment, depression, jealousy anxiety are all emotional problems. This emotional transformation takes me from Pragyaha to Sthitha Pragyaha.

Sri Krishna has been describing this process from shloka # 58

onwards. Here he now prescribes three exercises:

1. Sensory control: Sense objects enter the mind through the five sensory controls. Sri Krishna says we need to close the doors to sense objects. If not, all types of rubbish will enter our mind. A word, a picture, they all can excite our senses. This process of sense control is called Damaha. Damaha is very important in our path to knowledge.
2. Even with senses under control, sense objects can slip in and enter our mind. Then, what should I do? Once thought has entered, we need to control them. Do not allow continuation of the thought. This is in my control. Use will power to nip the thought in the bud. Thought discipline is called Kshama. Kshama is also very important in our path to knowledge.
3. Dwelling upon the teaching of the Acharya through reading, writing (notes) or finding some one to share with (or talk to) and relive the shravanam is called Nidhidhyasanam.

So in one form or the other, relive the sravanam. Reliving the sravanam, reliving the class, is called Nidhidhyasanam. This is an extremely important exercise. Therefore we have to spend time either on the same day or before coming to the class to review your notes.

Relived Sravanam helps in assimilating. It gradually transforms the mind.

While I may not be able to claim that I am a Gyani, I can say that, as compared to the past, I do not worry too much about incidents anymore.

Of all the three exercises Sri Krishna emphasizes Sense control or Damaha as most important.

Shloka # 64:

“Approaching objects with senses free from attachment and aversion, and controlled by the mind, the man who has mastered his mind wins serenity.”

Refreshing our mind about this shloka,

Swamiji says, our body is like a vehicle, the sense organs are like the wheels of the vehicle and the mind is like it's steering. This is the example given in the Kathopanishad. We should never lose control of this body vehicle. We need to use the steering to control the wheels and drive cautiously.

A person who is able to live such a disciplined life he obtains Prasadam or tranquility of mind. Such a person is free from violent emotions and the frequency

of his violent reactions are also reduced significantly. As the intensity of his reactions reduces, so does his recovery period as well.

For me, as a student, while they (emotional turmoil) will not be totally eliminated I am now able to better manage them.

Therefore, Arjuna practice these three disciplines.

Shloka #65:

“Serenity won, sufferings come to an end; the reason of that man, whose mind is serene, soon becomes steadfast.”

What is the advantage of an equanimous mind?

Prasada here means Shanthi or balanced or Samatvam. Prasada Budhi provides two benefits. They are:

1. Removal or destruction of all sorrow. Happiness need not come from the outside world. Outside world cannot give us happiness. “I” am the source of my happiness. Just like for a dog when chewing the bone, the bone hurts his mouth and the mouth bleeds. The dog enjoys its

own blood even as it chews the dry bone, thinking the bone is bleeding. So too for a human being, the sense object is like a bone. We bring our own happiness to the dry sense object and enjoy it. By removing mental disturbances we can bring out our own happiness. Once the disturbance is gone joy comes from within.

2. When the mind is calm, Self Knowledge becomes well rooted. When mind is calm Self Knowledge is well assimilated.

Shloka #66:

“The un-integrated mind has no wisdom; nor can such a person have yearning (for Self Knowledge). Without such yearning, no peace (is possible). For one lacking peace, how can there be happiness?”

Here Sri Krishna highlights Kshama and Dama. These two disciplines are very important.

Who is a student? One who has the concentration of a crow and the eye of a crane looking for fish on shore of a river. His food should be less; sleep should be less and dress simple.

We need the qualities of a student for Vedanta studies. For listening, reflecting and Nidhidhyasanam, all three stages, you require Kshamaḥ and Damaḥ. Therefore Arjuna, build up these two values first and foremost.

Yuktaha is one with control of Kshama and Dama. Without this Pragyaha is not possible. Without this control Nidhidhyasanam is also not possible.

Without sravanam, mananam and Nidhidhaysanam peace of mind is not possible. Swamiji reiterated that Gita study is done in a class. Hence he does not use the word ‘Discourse’ or ‘Pravachanam’ ‘Upanyasam’ etc. Here teaching is involved, concentration is involved and there is connection between each class. While purpose is not academic, the purpose is total

transformation of the way I look at life and that transformation brings peace of mind.

Therefore, Gita study brings the practical benefit of Shantih. Therefore Arjuna, if you want peace of mind, study and assimilate the Gita.

Shloka # 67:

“The mind that conforms to the roving senses robs (one) of perceptions, just as the wind sweeps the boat off its course.”

Next two shlokas are on sense control. Without sense control Atma Gyanam cannot occur. Even if knowledge does take place, somehow at crucial moments the sense organs will take away the knowledge. Suppose sense organs wander everywhere without my permission and with it the mind also wanders, they will not allow knowledge to take place.

Sri Krishna provides an example. If a man travels on a boat he needs to direct the boat. If not, the blowing wind will take it anywhere it wants. It does not require my permission and the boat may capsize. Similarly, the sense organs can be carried away and can destroy our Budhi.

Here Gyanam is an analogy for the boat. Gyanam takes one across ocean of Samsara. If boat is destroyed, I am also destroyed, due to lack of sense control.

Shloka # 68:

“Therefore, O hero, his wisdom is stable whose senses have been withdrawn on all sides from their (respective) objects.”

With this shloka, Sri Krishna concludes Sthitha Pragya Sadhanani topic. Since sense control plays an important role, the seeker's sense organs must be controlled. Suppression of sense organs is however not prescribed. Western Psychologists consider Eastern religions as suppressing. Eastern systems say both suppression and expression are dangerous. Gita prescribes

intelligent regulation. Stopping the river is also dangerous; because if you stop a river, there will be flood; and if you let the river flow in its own direction, then also it becomes waste of water; because it will go into the ocean. If you will not stop the river, nor allow the river to flow into the ocean, what do you do? Dam the river and channelize the water in the direction that you want. Gita prescribes channeling the energies of the sense organs and mind. A lot of our mental energy is wasted any way. We need to use our intelligence and mental energy wisely. We need to get back our capacity for concentration. We had this capacity as children. We still have that capacity. In the name of growth, we have lost that concentration. We have also lost the photographic mind that we had as a child. It is not that we do not have it; we just have not used that faculty. Therefore, a seeker should master the sense organs. Then he can receive the knowledge and the knowledge will be well assimilated as well.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 31

Greetings All,

Continuing his talk, Swamiji reminded us that Sri Krishna deals with two topics, Sthita Pragya Lakshanani and Sthita Pragyaha Sadhanani, in the final portion of chapter 2.

Sthitha means assimilation of teaching. This is conversion of intellectual knowledge into emotional strength. Kama, krodha, raga and dvesha do not affect him.

How does he come to this knowledge?

He does so by listening to scriptural knowledge from a competent teacher. It is not enough to listen; the student also has to do his own homework as well. The Guru can motivate, however, it is for the student to make the conversion.

How to convert?

Sri Krishna teaches three disciplines:

1. Sense restraint: The world through the five sense organs of sabda, sparsa, rupa, rasa, and gandha enters the mind. Anyone of them can agitate the mind. Consider how a word from a person can throw you off. Words can create havoc with us. Once the mind is disturbed we cannot retain the vedantic knowledge. Just like a concrete floor has to be allowed to be set after pouring the concrete, so also our mind should not be agitated after vedantic teaching. It should be allowed to be peaceful so that the knowledge sets in.

Sri Krishna recommends avoiding all emotional upheavals caused by sense organs. This is not easy. One has to be very alert to what is going on in the mind. Even a person with restraint can be pulled away by the senses.

Citing example of Sita, Swamiji says she was enticed by the golden deer (senses). It pulled Sita away from Rama, the symbol of spiritual ananda.

Shloka 61:

“Controlling them all, one should sit integrated, deeming ME supreme. Stable is his wisdom who has brought his senses under control.”

Sri Krishna says: Oh Arjuna let the sense organs be your instrument. Do not allow them to control you. Restrain them. However, do not suppress them. There is a difference between

restraint and suppression. Suppression is when I am following the advise of somebody. It is not based on my own will. It is an imposed denial. However, if I value the action, then whatever I do is mastery. It is based upon my own will.

To one who masters his senses, Vedantic Self -Knowledge becomes very relevant. This is sense control.

Now Sri Krishna also discusses the second discipline. When senses are pulled from outside pursuits, there is no distraction. However, a mind without distraction should also not be allowed to be idle. Use this time to dwell on me. Dwell on Sri Krishna as Ishwara or as Sri Krishna, the Atma. See me in your-self. Do Atma dhyanam. This Atma Dhyanam is also not easy. However, with integration it becomes easier. This is called Nidhidysanam.

Shlokas 12-25 is description of the Atma.

Dwelling on the essence of Shankaracharya's famous shloka below also helps.

“manobuddhyahamkaracittani naham
na ca srotrajivhe na ca ghrananetre
na ca vyomabhumih na tejo na vayuh
cidanandarupah sivoham sivoham.”

This is called Nidhidysanam.

Shloka # 62:

“Attachment to objects” is born when one ponders on them. Of attachment is born desire, and of desire, wrath.”

From this shloka onwards Sri Krishna teaches Thought discipline. Before this he taught sensory restraint. Sensory restraint is easier than restraining one's mind. This is also called Manonigraha or Kshama.

What happens if you do not restrain your thoughts? When one interacts with the world many things enter your mind. You cannot avoid the world entering your mind. This is called Vishaya Dhyanam. Ishwara Dhyanam is difficult while Vishaya dhyanam is easy. Vishaya means sense objects. Ask yourself if it is healthy and worthwhile to fantasize. If you are alert, you can curb the thoughts. It will stop a feeble thought from becoming a powerful one.

Thus sense objects cause feeble thoughts that by constant reinforcement become strong thoughts.

As per Vedas a word in itself is neither joy or sorrow. We are the one's who create the joy and sorrow.

When you dwell on something the mind tends to get attached to it. This is called Sangaha or fancy or yearning for something. The mind fantasizes about things and I feel I will be more complete if I get it. As we keep dwelling on it, it then becomes " I want it" and then " I cannot live without it". This can apply to an object or person. Thus, the height of this fantasy is called Kama. One is trapped or enslaved by the thought. When this happens I have forgotten all my teachings.

So here is how it works:

Vishaya Dhyanam> Vishaya Sangaha>Vishaya Kama>Vishaya Krodha>Budhi Nashaha.

Kama, we have already described as the height of fantasy or height of desire. Kama typically has two results.

- If the kama is not fulfilled, it results in anger also called Krodha.
- If Kama is fulfilled it leads to more desire also called Lobha.

Anger is desire in another form. Anger wants to destroy the source of obstruction.

With Lobha, the fulfilled Kama results in wanting more of it. There is no end to this desire. It leads to greed. Dhamaputra himself gambled and lost because of greed. Thus, kama leads to Lobha.

Shloka 63:

“From wrath arises delusion; failure of memory. Due to this latter, intelligence perishes, and from its loss total destruction ensues.”

When mind is in anger discriminative power, decency, dignity etc. are lost. I forget the person in front of me (father, mother, guru etc.). Americans call it, getting mad. Temporary madness occurs. All learning is not available to me. Knowledge was to be available to me in a crisis. Swamiji calls anger a Virus (vital information resources under seize). Anger is a virus for our brain computer. So, our knowledge is temporarily lost. Then there is loss of memory. Once knowledge is obstructed, discriminative power is permanently lost. This loss of Budhi is loss of human life.

If you want to shout at somebody, do it with thinking, rather than impulsively. In impulsive action we lose our purushartha.

(Note: **Puruṣārtha** means an “object of human pursuit”. It is a key concept in Hinduism, and refers to the four proper goals or aims of a human life. The four **puruṣārthas** are Dharma (righteousness, moral values), Artha (prosperity, economic values), Kāma (pleasure, love, psychological values) and Mokṣa (liberation, spiritual values).

Shloka # 64:

“Approaching objects with senses free from attachment and aversion, and controlled by the mind, the man who has mastered his mind wins serenity.”

Now, Sri Krishna comes back to sense control again. He places

a lot of importance to Indriya Nigraha. He tells Arjuna: “May you perceive sense objects through the sense organs but do not allow Raga (attachment or an object of joy) or Dvesha (dislike or an object of sorrow) to form. Do not allow this misconception to come in. Never get addicted to anything. Let sense organs obey your mind. It is easy to say no first, later it becomes more and more difficult. This is a life of mastery. This is a person with self-control. In this shloka Atma means instrument or mind. In such a person there is no more violent emotions. He is able to see any situation and act calmly without getting agitated. If an argument develops, he walks away from it. This way, your composure is back very soon. So, you have to be very alert.

The word Prasadam in the shloka means peace of mind or shanthi.

Swamiji says, to stop an argument does not mean I am conceding. It just means I have postponed. It avoids mental turbulence. This is very important in assimilation of knowledge.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 30

Greetings All,

Continuing his talk, Swamiji reminded us that Arjuna asked Sri Krishna, what is the life style of a Sthitaprgyaha? How does such a person respond to situations?

Sthita pragyaha is one who has attained self-knowledge. A

Karma Yogi also has knowledge. A Karma Yogi is, however, not yet a Gyani. One is called a Gyani only after one who has obtained Jivatma Paramatma aikyam. He has the realization “Aham Atma Asmi”.

Shlokas 12-25 details the nature of the Atma as Akarta, Abhoktha, Nithyaha etc. This knowledge, which is an intellectual knowledge, must then be converted into emotional strength. Such a person is a sthithapragyaha. I am Atmana Tushtaha (self sufficient without expectations). This is the **first attribute** of a Sthithapragyaha.

And the **second attribute** is “because I am as I am; I do not require things to complete me.” Missing things in life is desire. Thus, one has desire for marriage or a home or a car. The seeking for the missing is the beginning of desire. The Sthithapragyaha, however approaches this differently. He feels “I am happy as I am”. He does not miss anything, or need anything. Possessing and needing are different, says Swamiji. Possessing does not mean that the object I possess binds me. However, in case of need it is the need that makes me the possessed one. So, never be the possessed. Sarva Kama Tyaga or no more need for things.

The **third attribute** of a Sthithapragyaha is Samatvam. He maintains an emotional balance in both favorable and unfavorable situations.

The **fourth attribute** is Vairagyam. He does not emotionally depend upon anything. Emotional dependence is our biggest problem.

The **fifth attribute** is a lack of fear. He is ready to lose anything at any time. That preparedness to lose anything at any time is the inner strength. It is also called Abhayam.

The **sixth attribute** is his freedom from anger. Anger is a converted form of desire. When one has expectation, potential for anger exists. I never want to give freedom to others

because I need them, to depend on them. If anybody says: I am happy without you, we cannot stand it. We want everybody to say, I am missing you. Raga, bhaya and krodha all go together. The Gyani is free from all of them.

In Shloka # 57 Sri Krishna says, the Sthithapragya is not carried away by favorable or unfavorable situations. His intellect is not clouded by happiness or sorrow. No person can make my life meaningless. Gyani is not carried away by any situation.

Swami Chinmayananda used to say: We all have come alone, travel alone and go alone. Our intimate feelings, we will not be able to share with anyone.

Shloka 58: “ When he wholly withdraws his senses from their objects, just as a tortoise does his limbs from all sides, his wisdom is stable.”

Upto shloka # 57 Sri Krishna talks of a person who has converted knowledge to emotional strength. Thus, from a pragya he becomes a sthitapragya. Now, from shloka 58 onwards Sri Krishna changes the subject. He now discusses how can a person convert self-knowledge to emotional strength. This knowledge must be converted to mental strength. Swamiji says there are three disciplines one has to follow for this conversion. They are:

1. **Nidhidhyasanam:** or Vedantic meditation. Dwelling on the teaching that I do not depend on anything. Aham Atma Asmi. Aham Purnam asmi. Imagine a smoker. He cannot imagine a life without a cigarette. He forgets that he was once happy without it before he started smoking. He is now used to a particular way of life. Similarly, we think that life is complete only when certain things and people are around and without them life is impossible. Our vasana is very strong here. I have to break that vasana; by repeatedly asserting I do not need the so-

called people and situations to be happy.

I may need things for physical survival such food clothing etc. however; I do not need anything for emotional survival.

One must break this emotional dependence on people and things. Just as a child is taught to learn to cycle, where someone holds the back of the bike and then releases the hold as the child starts cycling. The child is not aware that it is now independently cycling. So, also, we need Vedanta to help us realize our emotional independence. This process is called Nidhidhyasanam. This means, after the class, you should spend some time in introspection on the teachings.

“manobuddhyahamkaracittani naham

na ca srotrajivhe na ca ghrananetre

na ca vyomabhumih na tejo na vayuh

cidanandarupah sivoham sivoham.”

Focusing on the essence of this shloka written by Shankaracharya, and internalizing it, is called Nidhidhyasanam.

2. Indriya Nigraha: This is the second discipline of regulation of sense organs. Until knowledge becomes steady, we should avoid violent emotions. They are detrimental to Vedanta. Knowledge must be protected. It is like protecting a sapling from heavy rain, winds etc. Once it becomes a tree it cannot be destroyed. Emotions come through our five sense organs of sabda, sparsa, rupa, rasa, and gandha. This five-fold world is gatecrashing into my mind. They enter the mind through the five doors and any of them can disturb the mind. Avoid such things that can disturb us.

Never get into arguments as they disturb our mind. In an argument more heat is generated than light.

What we want is enlightenment; light is knowledge; in an argument nobody learns anything. Everyone only wants to establish his or her own ego. So, whenever you get into an argument, tell them "I am sorry, I am not interested" and still if he or she continues to talk, quit that place; this is called Indriya Nigrahaḥ; never allow violent emotions.

Anything that provokes, raga, krodha, dvesa, kama, lobha and moha must be avoided.

(Raga: emotional attachment, Likes.

Dvesha: dislikes

Kama: lust, craze, desire

krodha :anger, hatred

lobha: greed, miserliness, narrow-minded

moha : delusory emotional attachment)

This is indriya nigrahaḥ.

3) **Mano Nigraha:** This is the third discipline of regulation of thought process.

Someone tells you your comments are nonsense. You get upset. You keep dwelling on his comments and this keeps building up in your mind. Suddenly a molehill of a comment builds itself into a mountain of anger. No event in itself produces a momentary emotion. Rather, it gradually builds up to a powerful emotion. Thought build up is in my hand. I can control it. This is mental regulation. I can observe the event in my mind to learn from it and then drop it.

With Indriya nigraha and Mano nigraha mind becomes quiet and serene and this will transform my life.

Thus the three sadhanas or disciplines required are: Nidhidhyasanam, Indriya Nigrahaḥ, and Mano Nigraha. This is

the process of dwelling upon the teaching, regulating the sense organs and regulating the thought process. Of these three processes, Sri Krishna is highlighting the sensory regulation first from verse No.58 onwards up to 61. These four verses deal with sensory regulation.

Swamiji says a Pragyaha is like a sapling that grows into a tree to Sthitaprgyaha.

Expanding on Shloka # 58 Swamiji says, a turtle can be easily killed, as it does not have a weapon. It only has a thick shell. In danger, it withdraws all limbs and its head until the threat is gone. Similarly a pragyaha when he sees raga, dvesha, kama and krodha, provoked by the ego withdraws. It is difficult to withdraw from an argument. So prevent it. One should also withdraw from programs in TV and content in books that provoke your senses. So, a pragyaha withdraws his senses from sense objects (drugs, liquor etc. come to mind). Do not confront sense objects. Say no, in the beginning itself.

Shloka # 59:

"Objects, but not the taste for them, fall off as regards the man who feeds not on them. When he intuitis the supreme (Reality), even this taste wanes."

Addictions are of two types:

- 1) Sensory and
- 2) Mental.

Mental addiction is deeper. Even after giving up sensory addictions mental addictions remain. During withdrawal period one has to be very careful to ensure the object of addiction is kept away. It may still be there mentally. This is like person trying to be a sanyasi (physically), but mentally his mind still dwells on worldly pleasures. Growing out is better than suppression.

Even this mental craving will go away when spiritual Ananda in the mind replaces it. This pleasure is much greater than all drugs. Sri Krishna compares this state to having a great lake versus a small pond. It does not mean worldly pleasures have to be given up. The wise person now does not depend on worldly pleasures anymore. Rather, it is a bonus for him.

Shloka 60:

“ The impetuous senses, Arjuna, of even a learned man who strives, forcibly drive the mind astray.”

Sri Krishna says sense regulation is not that easy. If one fails initially do not feel guilty. Control requires a lot of alertness. Be alert with respect to sensory organs.

Pramathini Manthanam means powerful churning rod (sense organs). Our five sense organs are constantly churning our mind. They can churn our mind into violence. Words are the biggest problem. They can take away the mind from Vedanta. One word uttered by someone can disturb us so violently from all the teachings of Gita that temporarily I can become a violent animal. We must be alert and balanced at all times.

With best wishes

Bagawat Geeta, Class 29

Greetings All,

Continuing his talk, Swamiji reminded us that Arjuna wanted to know about the Sthitha Pragya. How does such a person respond to situations? Is there any practical benefit to the study of the Gita , asks Swamiji?

Shloka # 55: A person comes to Sthitha Pragyaha by:

1. Following the path of Karma Yoga and leading a religious life to prepare his mind for Gyana Yogyatha.
2. Studying scriptures under a qualified Guru by sravanam and mananam. This is a required step to gyanam.

There is a misconception that in Kaliyuga one does not have to study scriptures.

Through this study one becomes a Pragyaha or a Gyani. It results in an intellectual conviction that I need nothing else to be complete. Right now we may feel we need many things in life to feel complete. Physical dependence everybody has got; there is dependence on food, clothing and shelter. We are not talking of physical dependence. Emotionally a Gyani is independent of external factors. He is happy in himself. The reality is that we may need only some things to survive. Many rich people with a lot of material possessions are among the unhappiest people.

By systematic vedantic study, I should be intellectually convinced that I do not require anything to be secure; to be fulfilled; to be happy; to be fearless; to be anxiety free and to be self-sufficient. This is an intellectual transformation. It is what we call intellectual conviction. To become a Gyani is to go through an intellectual change.

Karma Yoga> Gyana Yogyatha> Pragyaha>Emotional strength and immunity. This process leads me to a place where I do not get upset at anything in life.

This process is called Nidhidhyasanam.

Thus: Karma Yoga> Gyana Yoga> Nidhidhyasanam> Sthitha Pragyaha.

Through sravanam and mananam, he gets pragyaha; through nidhidhyasanam, he converts pragyaha into sthithapragyaha.

Shloka # 55:

“ When one wholly discards desires of the heart and becomes exclusively content with the Self , one is called a sage of stable wisdom.”

Characteristics of a Sthitha Pragyaha:

1. Gyani does not have any expectations meaning he has performed Kama Tyaga. When an expectation is not fulfilled, I get upset. Expectations are a source of sorrow. I, however, will behave, as I want. If I ask someone to do something, without expectation, it is a non-poisonous expectation. Usually this sort of expectation is for the benefit the other person. Expectation becomes poisonous when my expectation is not met and I become upset. This is called Samsara. Gyani has no expectations from anyone. So, expectations have to be dropped.
2. He is full and complete in himself because he feels, I am “I”. If the completeness is dependent, you are not a gyani. This is called Atma Tushtih or Self Sufficiency.
3. Samatvam: One with a poised state of mind. How often am I disturbed? What is intensity of disturbance? How long is the recovery time? One should consider maintaining an emotional log to discover one’s state of evolution. A gyani is, for most part, not disturbed at all.

Shloka # 56:

“ The silent sage is said to have a stable wisdom when sufferings no longer perturb his mind , when he ceases to cling to pleasures, and he is rid of attachment, fear and wrath.”

All these disturbances gradually disappear. He is not carried away by favorable situations either. He realizes it is temporary.

Raga (emotional attachment), Bhaya (fear) and Krodha (Anger)

together are known as attributes of Samsara.

Whatever I depend upon (money, people etc.) are insecure. Presently, I am holding on to such things. One should hold on to something secure such as God.

Unintelligent dependence is raga. This dependence causes Bhaya. Anger is directly proportional to Raga. All obstacles make us angry.

Thus: Raga>Bhaya>Krodha.

Gyani has no raga, as such he also does not have fear and anger. Moksha is A-Bhayam. Such a person is a muni or a sage. The internal transformation has made him a sage. Even if he is a family man he is a Muni if he has the right knowledge. The knowledge has become an emotional strength.

Shloka # 57:

“ His wisdom is stable who clings to nothing good or evil when these occur to him; he neither seeks nor shuns them.”

Sri Krishna describing Sthita Pragyaha Lakshanani says he is one who is free. Gyani is Anabhisnehaha. Sneha means attachment or stickiness. One who is in Sneha is attached and as such weak. A Gyani is one who loves everyone but does not get stuck on any one. This psychological freedom is called Anabhisnehaha.

Even a Gyani faces situations that are favorable and unfavorable based upon his Prarabdha karmas. Many people criticize Vedanta for India's problems. A teacher of Vedanta is also criticized for India's problems. Gyani faces such situations without being carried away or agitated. He faces everything with Samatvam.

The question is often asked should I meekly surrender to such a situation? Vedanta does not say one has to surrender to improper situations. It does not mean we have to accept

Akramam (Wrong done to one). For any situation we can have three types of responses:

1. Impulsive reaction. Reacting without thinking. This has long-term adverse reaction. It shows lack of self-control.
2. Meek surrender to a situation or abuse. This is unintelligent inaction born out of weakness. Here we will suffer from this abuse.
3. Intelligent action, after thinking about it. If it is a choice-less situation, strengthen your mind to reduce its impact. If choice-ful situation, take thoughtful action. Sama, Dana, Bheda and Dandam are the steps to be followed. If we have to punch the nose, do it consciously. Do not miss the nose! What shastra says is, do not do it impulsively. This is similar to a court that gives capital punishment without impulsiveness.

Swamiji says we normally swing between 1 and 2 above. Shastra's say both are bad.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy