

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 sivoam sivoam.”

This is called Nidhidyasanam.

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: **Puruṣartha** 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 **puruṣarthas** 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

Kaivalya Upanishad, Class 9

Greetings All,

Continuing his teaching on Kaivalya Upanishad, Swamiji says, after talking about nidhidhyasanam, Brahmaji has come to sravanam and mananam in reverse order. Sri Krishna also does the same when he reverses the order in chapter 2 of the Gita dealing with Gyana yoga first and then coming to Karma yoga. It is the approach of an optimistic teacher starting from a higher level and then going down. Brahmaji also gave example of an Arani as an example of sravanam and mananam. He brought out the Jivatma Paramatma Aikyam as the oneness. Although superficially they are different (jivatma and paramatma) essentially they are one. Jivatma and Paramatma both have Atma in common. If so, what contributes to their difference? The Upadhi or media of their manifestation causes the superficial differences. The face is the same one but it looks different in a concave mirror compared to the one in a convex mirror.

These differences are caused incidentally and are also known as Aupadhika Bheda. The differences include, one is Vyashthi and other is Samashthi.

Vyashthi is microcosmic. Here, in this world it is a miserable entity or Samsari. I create my own dream world and dream body and then identify with it. Until now I was creator, now I have become the creature. Creator of dream has become the dream. Micro upadhi is dominated by Rajo and Tamo gunas. Satva Guna dominates macro upadhi.

When original consciousness is in micro medium it identifies with body rather than the formless Brahman. Thus, he becomes a karta and bhogta (eater) and also gets into a mess or samsara.

Shloka # 13:

Describing the dream state, the jivatma via micro upadhi entering swapna is an enactment of jagrat. Here also he is a sukha dukha bhogta. Here it is not an Ishwara srishthi but a Jiva srishthi. I am in a privately created mind. The micro individual also has micro creative power. This maya shakthi is called kriya shakthi.

So, Jagrat and Swapna states of individual are over. Out of sheer tiredness he switches off the Jiva during sleep. Ishwara prapancha and Jiva prapancha dissolve in sleep. They go into a dormant state. Laya is the sleep of the Jivatma, while Pralaya is the sleep of the paramatma.

Overwhelmed by ignorance, Tamas, Jivatma is in total ignorance. Total knowledge and total ignorance are both blissful. Thus, Gyani and ignorant are both blissful. In waking state we are partially blissful. "I" is known but Atma is not known. Thus, Jivatma suffers Samsara in Avastha Trayam. In sleep also it is dormant.

Shloka # 14:

After sleep what happens? There is no permanent sleep, either in the same body or in another body (after death). Who is responsible for waking one up? Due to its past papams and punyams it has to wake up to exhaust them through its experiences. It has to go through sukha and dukha experiences. In sleep it is in suspended animation. Karma can only be exhausted in dream or waking states. This cycle of sleep-dream-waking continues. This is the beginning-less cycle process. It will never end until one gets gyanam. The cycle is an endless one. Thus, micro operation has concluded that jivatma remains in sharira trayam.

Shiva's third eye burns down the three stages.

Now Brahma shifts to macro. Example of a bald man with a wig

was cited. Atma has two wigs. Same Atma in macro is Paramatma.

Effect-Karyam-Micro upadhi.

Cause-Karanam-macro Upadhi.

With the same atma now through a macro upadhi the paramatma is born. Atma is thus Srishthi Karanam. "I" dis- identify from my dream body and wake up and the dream becomes a false projection of mind. Paramatma is adhara of Laya. The avastha trayam dissolves. Same jivatma plays paramatma role. The reality is, it is neither Jivatma nor paramatma, and rather it is the undivided awareness. Karanam and Karyam are both its attributes. This pure Atma is Ananda (never wanting). Jivatma and paramatma are both one and same.

Soham, So Paramatma is a mahavakyam. God and I are one.

Shloka # 15:

From same Atma the whole creation is born. Paramatma becomes the karanam of creation. In this birth of creation following are created: Pranas, Antahakaranas, ten indriyani, akash, Vayu, Agni, Apaha and prithvi.

First level is Micro or individual.

Second level is macro or Srishthi.

Order of creation is:

Subtle elements>subtle elementals>Gross elements> Gross elementals are all born out of paramatma.

Shloka #16: Is a series of mahavakyams.

Teacher says Karanam Paramatma is none other than Karyam Jivatma.

How can Kranam and karyam be same? In an equation, says swamiji, when two sides are not evidently equal, but

essentially equal, an equation is required.

Karana Paramatma=Karya Jivatma, because they are essentially same.

Supreme causal Brahman results in:

- Karanam-Subtle –eternal. Example of clay in the pot.
- Karyam is gross.
- Nithyam is eternal.
- You (Karanam) are that Karyam Jivatma.

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 Sthithaprgyaha 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 pragyaha he becomes a sthitapragyaha. Now, from shloka 58 onwards Sri Krishna changes the subject. He now discusses how can a person converts 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 with out 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 intuits 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 Pragyaha. 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> Nidhidhysanam> Sthitha Prgyaha.

Through sravanam and mananam, he gets pragya; through nidhidhyasanam, he converts pragya into sthitapragya.

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 Tushthi 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

Kaivalya Upanishad, Class 8

Greetings All,

Continuing his teaching on Kaivalya Upanishad, Swamiji says, in previous class we discussed Nididhyasanam and then Brahmaji discussed the Gyana Phalam as well. Gyanam is the only means of liberation. Are other sadhanas not useful if they do not lead to liberation? They are useful for preparing the mind but not for liberation. Karma Yoga, Japa, Puja etc. purify the mind. There are several margas for purifying the mind. One should use a method that one prefers for such purification. Puja and service to humanity are all aspects of this purification process. However, after purification, one still has to come to Vedanta sravanam, mananam and nidhidhysanam. It is just like a temple that has many doors to enter. However, there is only one door to God.

Shloka # 11:

In this shloka sravanam and mananam are discussed. Brahmaji has already discussed nididhyasanam. He is clearly not following the normal order of such things.

The pursuit of self-enquiry is called Atma Vichara. You cannot look directly into the Atma. One can do so only through the Shastras. A mirror is for looking at your self. Darpana darshanam is looking at your self. Looking into the shastras is also the same. You are looking at your self. Shastra Vichara is Sravanam and mananam.

Here an analogy is used. The bow and arrow analogy was used in the mundaka Upanishad to describe the self, the jivatma and Paramatma. In Katho Upanishad the chariot analogy was used. Here self-knowledge is compared to a fire. Sri Krishna also used the fire analogy in the Gita. That is the reason in every Hindu household we start the day by lighting a lamp, usually performed by the lady of the house. Lamp represents knowledge.

So, what is common between gyanam and agni? Fire removes ignorance and darkness also called Aavaranam. Darkness makes something existing as non-existing as it is not visible anymore. Light removes the darkness and brings the object back to light.

Ignorance here is Atma A-gyanam. Benefit of Atma knowledge is shanthi or (nimmadi-tamil). Without knowledge of Atma, poornatvam, internal security etc. disappear. Once ignorance is destroyed Atma is discovered. With this discovery our struggles in life come to an end. Samsara is destroyed. Karmas are also destroyed.

Thus:

1. Agni destroys everything, so also gyanam destroys samsara.
2. Fire illumines everything. So also Gyanam illumines

something we did not know before.

In this shloka the fire's destructive aspect is brought out. In this shloka, the process of producing a fire and producing knowledge are described and shown as similar.

Sacred fire is produced during a yagna. Two Arani woods are used. One is called Adho Arani or lower piece with a hole in it. The upper piece called Uttara Arani is a rod that fits into the hole. Then, by churning the upper rod, sparks are created. Coconut husk or cotton is used now to kindle a fire from the spark.

For acquiring knowledge too churning has to be performed. The Adho Arani here is the mind of the student. It has to be steady.

Uttara Arani, the upper rod is the shastra Vakya or Omkara. Churning is the analysis of shastra Vakyam. The six lingams analogy was cited. The Guru helps in the analysis or churning. Out of this sravanam and mananam churning spark of knowledge is produced. The spark has to be protected and nourished through the nidhidhyasanam process of recollection by the student.

Once the spark becomes a conflagration it will spread like a forest fire and burn everything in its path.

Defining some terms in the shloka:

Atma here means mind and it must be dry with Vairagyam. It must also be steady, as it is like a lower Arani.

Pranavam here means Omkara or shastric statement is like the upper Arani or the rod.

Gyana nirmathanam means churning of gyanam or analysis of shastric statement and practices by which the spark of knowledge rises.

Panditaha: Possessor of knowledge. Panda means Gyanam.

Pasham means shackles such as Ahamkara, Karmas etc.

Therefore, may you perform enquiry of your Self.

Shloka # 12:

A sample process for performing a shastric enquiry is now described. Shlokas 12 through 22 describe this process.

The conscious principle described in shloka # 6 is all pervading. It is called Atma (Aapnothi Sarvam or all pervading). Even though the Atma is one, it manifests through a medium and takes on the appearance of the medium. Thus, the same electricity flowing through one bulb is dull but through another one is bright. Along the same lines the reflection of my face in a convex mirror is different from that in a concave mirror. My face did not change.

Thus, the conscious principle, when it manifests through an inferior medium (body, mind, thought complex) appears as Jivatama.

The same conscious principle, when it manifests through a superior medium (utkrishta upadhi) appears as Paramatma.

Please note the inferiority and superiority do not belong to the Atma but belong to the medium.

Citing another example:

One water is called a wave, a smaller version.

One water is called the ocean, a bigger version.

Ocean is the cause of the wave. Wave is the effect of the ocean.

Water is neither. It is just water.

Thus conscious principle is neither cause nor effect.

This is the process of enquiry. Instead of identifying with the medium (higher or lower) identify with the Original Consciousness.

Shloka # 12:

First the teacher talks about Atma manifesting through an inferior medium as Jivatama.

The Atma, I, have identified with the sharirams (three of them). This results in many types of karmas. The "I" becomes a karta to become a bhoktha. He then enjoys or experiences with his wife (connotes all human relationships) and all non-beings (food, drinks etc.) as well. All this occurs in the waking state. All these experiences get recorded as well. Jivatma thus goes through experiences in all three avasthas (waking, sleeping and dreaming).

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Kaivalya Upanishad, Class 7

Continuing his teaching on Kaivalya Upanishad, Swamiji says, in Shlokas 5 through 7, Brahmaji gave instructions on the three levels of meditation. Everyone has to go through all three levels of meditation. First level is Eka Roopa Ishwara Dhyanam, second level is Aneka Roopa Ishwara Dhyanam and third level is Aroopa Ishwara Dhyanam.

At the third level, Aroopa Dhyanam, the meditator himself is the object of meditation. A person can go through levels one

and two but then has to perform Vedanta Vichara under a qualified Guru. Only after performing this sadhana can he go to the third level of Aroopa Dhyanam also called Nididhyasanam. Swamiji declares that Aroopa Dhyanam is Nididhyasanam.

Gita chapter 12 also describes the steps of meditation to be taken for Moksha.

Shloka # 8:

When one comes to the third level of meditation, the Aroopa Ishwara is same as the Meditator or Brahman or Atman. At this stage one becomes aware that Brahman and Atman are one and the same. Brahmatma is also called Paramatma.

Shloka 8 now describes the Paramatma.

The Paramatma is the one formless Brahman that assumes all types of forms. Many people think that Hinduism has many Gods, while in fact it is actually one god appearing with many forms. Brahma assumes forms due to influence of Maya. Every deity is a form of Brahman. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are all the same Brahman in different forms.

Transformation from Form to Formless is the real transformation. Transcending the form requires a subtle mind, until then one should continue with Eka Roopa or Aneka Roopa meditation.

What is Brahman's original nature?

Its nature is formless. That Paramatma is a changeless one, one without a form or Akshara or the Ultimate one (Paramaha). Its nature is Self-luminous Consciousness.

The same Brahman is Prana, Kala, Agni and Chandrama. Everything is Brahman. It is "me" as well. Once you understand this, you will say "I am, All". This "I" is not the body, mind and thought complex, rather it is the consciousness or

illuminator of all.

Shloka # 9:

Everything in creation is Brahman. Everything in past, present and future is Brahma Chaitanyam. Brahman is eternal or Sanatanam. Just as a wave in the ocean may feel it is separate and distinct, however, once it realizes it is also water, it becomes one with the ocean.

By knowing Brahman as "myself" one crosses over mortality. It is really the crossing over the fear of death. In life, we cling to everything, including material and people, due to the fundamental fear of death. The older one gets, the greater is our sense of insecurity. This insecurity is also known as Samsara. Moksha is freedom from insecurity or Samsara.

Citing the wave and ocean example again, the wave looks at itself as an individual wave. It will always be afraid of mortality, as it knows it will die. So do human beings. Wave should understand that "I am water" and my waviness is an incidental form that can come and go. I am really water. So also, my humanness is really incidental. This human form will come and go but "I" the Atman will be forever. Thus, one has to know that Brahman as "I", myself.

Since this Gyana yoga is a difficult path, is there an alternate path to Gyana Yoga?

Upanishads say there is no other way of liberation other than Gyana Marga. Scriptures provide many paths for purification but there is only one path for moksha and that is Gyanam.

So, what is the solution to a gyana marga that is so difficult? Swamiji says we should try to make the gyanam easier. The best way to make it easier is to prepare yourself for gyana marga. Preparedness will help in any situation. Therefore, follow Karma Yoga, Upasana and then come to Gyana Marga.

Shloka # 10:

The wise person enjoys wisdom. What is his vision?

A wise person is one who has gyanam having followed all stages of meditation. Such a person:

1. Appreciates that atma is present in everything. All bodies are threaded together in one consciousness.
2. He appreciates that the Atma is the sub stratum of everything. Everything is in Atma (Sarvaadhar).

Citing example of space, Swamiji says, it is enclosed in the walls of the temple. Thus, you have a large room or a small room. You can also say it is a one liter pot or a 10 liter pot. Space is within the container. The reality is that space is not within the container rather all containers are within space. So also, Consciousness is in every one of you. All of you are also in the one indivisible, non-dual Consciousness.

By knowing this, the knower becomes one with Brahman. The Knower becomes Brahman. Until now, the division between Brahman and me was a misconception. The dropping of this notion is attaining merger.

Is there any simpler path? As per Upanishad there is no other path. All paths lead to gyanam. Gyanam takes us to moksha. Hence, in our culture, we light a lamp to dispel our ignorance.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Baghavat Geeta, Class 28

Greetings All,

Shloka # 55:

Sri Krishna answered:

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

Refreshing our memory, Swamiji says, we have come to the fourth and final topic of Sthitha Pragyaha. Arjuna asked Sri Krishna if a person who has gone through all Sadhanas and become a Gyani, how does such a person face life? How does he respond to situations? What are his Lakhsanani's?

Before a person becomes a Sthitha Pragyaha he has to follow the following three steps:

1. Lead a religious life following path of Karma Yoga.
2. Study Vedanta scriptures under a competent teacher following Sravanam and Mananam.

These two steps will make him a Pragyaha or one with conviction in the teachings. At this stage knowledge is still at the intellectual level.

3) But even this prajñā status is not enough, because the knowledge remains at the intellectual level and therefore in the third stage, he has to convert the intellectual knowledge into emotional strength, because throughout the life, it is our emotional personality that is interacting. Emotional personality is the one that stands out in all of us. Any little disturbance bothers us. This personality bears the brunt of every situation. And if that emotional personality is not transformed, knowledge will be there at one level, but in my day-to-day life, I may continue to go through the turmoils

that I went through before. And therefore, if Vedanta should be of any practical use, I have to spend time, converting this knowledge into emotional strength, which is called Sthitha (Sthira) Pragyaha. This status should be great help, especially during a crisis.

And this process of converting prajna into sthita prajna, jnanam into jnana nishta is the third stage and that person who has purified his mind; who has gained the knowledge and who has derived emotional strength from that knowledge, such a person is called sthitaprajnah; such a person is also called jnana nishta, atma nista as well as jivan mukthaḥ. He has insulated himself, like a person who has insulated his hands and legs and can now touch a live wire and it will not shock him.

Arjuna asked Sri Krishna, What kind of a person is this?

The Gyani is not controlled by external emotional factors. He is happy within himself. Citing example of a man with a walking stick, once he gets the strength back in his leg, he drops the stick. So also, a Gyani drops all his Kama. So, his Poornatvam leads him to Kama Tyaga.

Kama here means desired object although it can also mean desires. Desire is in the mind wriggling like worms. Wherever we go, we cannot drop it. It follows us everywhere, disturbing us all the time.

Tyaga or renunciation is of two types.

1) I cannot reach the grapes so I walk away calling it sour grapes. A man goes to Hrishikesh running away from his family's problems. These are examples where my desires are suppressed. This is not true renunciation.

2) Walking away from situations due to my Self Knowledge leads to a desire-less stage or true renunciation.

Swamiji says there are two types of desires:

- 1) Allowed desires and
- 2) Not allowed desires.

Allowed desires: For a desire to be allowed it has to fulfill three conditions.

1. Legitimate: The desire must be legitimate or Dharmic. Desire for one's children's welfare is legitimate. Desire for a home for the family bought through honest earnings is legitimate.
2. Moderate: When worldly desires reach such levels that spiritual pursuit is forgotten, it is not an acceptable state. Human beings have a material aspect as well as a spiritual aspect. Whatever I do, I must remember that material things including this body are all impermanent and incidental. Our real core is spiritual. So, provide time for spirituality first and then pursue material goals.
3. Desires must be non-binding: Convert desires into preferences. Or make it non binding. When a desire is binding it can upset you or uplift you. In pursuing a desire you may or may not obtain it. Any dream can shatter. A binding Kama is a time bomb. Defuse it by proper understanding. I have a desire. I work for it. But, there are chances it may not be fulfilled. When the desire is not fulfilled, one must be mentally prepared for the disappointment as well. Citing an example consider you are watching your favorite TV show when the power goes off. I must be mentally prepared for this disappointment. This is converting the Kama from binding to non-binding or Shuddha Kama (Legitimate, moderate and nonbinding). Shudha Kama is allowed. Even Shankaracharya had desires that allowed him to write the Bhashyam. As per Vedas, even Bhagawan had desires.

If a Gyani is desire-less, then how come desire is allowed?

Shankaracharya himself raises this question and he answers saying that Bhagavan's and jnani's kamas are Shuddha kama's; if they are fulfilled, wonderful; if not fulfilled also it is fine.

Jnani has got motive coming from within him to work hard; but that motive is without a sting. So, whatever happens, it does not hurt him. And therefore, Jnani renounces all ashuddha kamas; whatever kamas he has, they are shuddha.

So, Ashudha Kama should be renounced.

Shloka # 56:

“The silent sage is said to have 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.”

How does a Gyani respond to unfavorable situations in life? A Gyani too cannot avoid unfavorable situations. We all have prarabhdha Karma to work out as does the Gyani. Gyani may not acquire any Agami Karmas, but whatever he has acquired they have to play out.

Gyani's mind is emotionally so strong that disturbances are minimal. As we assimilate the teachings the mind gradually becomes strong. How to measure our selves? Swamiji cautioned us that we should not measure others, only measure our self.

Check for the following:

1. The frequency of mental disturbances, are they becoming less? Consider maintaining a daily diary.
2. Watch the intensity of mental disturbances. When intensity is small, the reaction goes away soon. When reactions are strong, it can overflow into the organ of speech. Speech can become harsh. If it overflows to physical body, shivering and other symptoms occur and

both body and mind are affected.

3. How much time do I take to recover balance? Emotional trauma can take a long time to recover sometimes weeks, years, or even a lifetime. With knowledge recovery should be faster.

All these disturbances can also occur due to positive emotions as well. A man won an election after many attempts at it. The emotion of the win gave him a heart attack.

Gyani is one who is not carried away even in a positive situation. Gyani is free from:

1. Ragaha: emotional attachments
2. Shoka:
3. Moha:

(Note: *Raga*, *Shoka* and *Moha*. *Raga* means dependence, attachment. *Shoka* means grief, sorrow. *Moha* means conflict, confusion caused by *Raga*. It also means depending on external things or people or situations to be happy.)

Attachment comes from dependence or a weak mind. Attachment is always asking what will "I" get out of it. Attachment thinks, since I want to get a benefit, I want to control the other person or it establishes possessiveness.

Love, however, comes from a strong mind. Love comes with the mindset asking: "What does the other person get out of it? What can I give?" To love is not to control, but give freedom to the other person.

Gyani has love in his heart.

Take away from this class:

1. Consider keeping a daily emotional diary.
2. Concepts of love versus attachment taught today try to bring it into your daily life.
3. At the last Kaivalya class, there was a passionate

discussion about Karma yoga and if it is teaching us escapism? In this Gita class, Swamiji brings answers that provide greater clarity to this question. So, is desire for material objects acceptable? Can a workingman aspire for a higher position, say, to become a CEO? The answer is, it is absolutely all right to have such desires so long as they fit into the requirements of "Acceptable desires". It is perfectly **legitimate** to seek any advancement including to the position of a CEO. The challenge is, in the process of advancement, one has to bring in **moderation**. Spiritual goals should continue to be primary, materials goals being secondary. In climbing up the ladder one can fail. The failure should not result in creating emotional havoc. One should be able to accept it with minimal shock. This is the **non-binding desire** aspect. One should thank God even for the failure for he may have saved you from something much worse such as a broken family, estranged wife and children etc. I suspect future classes will elaborate on some of these themes.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Kaivalya Upanishad, Class 6

Greetings All,

Continuing his teaching on Kaivalya Upanishad Swamiji says, the student approached the teacher and asked for Brahma Vidya. He was sufficiently informed that it was the only means of liberation. What are the means to obtain Brahma Vidya?

Brahmji says there are two means. 1. Direct or Sakshat and 2. Supporting means.

Direct means requires Sravanam, Mananam and Nidhidhyanam or Gyana Yoga.

Indirect means requires Vairagyam. Just as a plant requires a seed (direct means) and soil, water, sunlight (indirect means).

Vairagyam or Tyagam is of two types:

1. Internal renunciation and
2. External renunciation.

Internal renunciation is essential. External renunciation is not compulsory. It is required only if it supports internal renunciation.

After presenting both means Brahmaji now discusses a range of Sadhanas that are life long pursuits. It may even be life long pursuits. Swamiji reminded us that we are in this class, here today, because of our karmas from our previous birth. It is that which attracted us to this class.

The three stages of Sadhana are now described.

1. Practice Karma Yoga to purify the mind.
2. Practice Upasana Yoga to bring focusing capacity to mind and
3. Above two result in Gyanam.

Shloka # 5:

Swamiji says Shlokas 5, 6 and 7 are all describing the entire range of Dhyanam. The three stages of Dhyanam are:

1. Eka Roopa Dhyanam
2. Aneka Roopa Dhyanam
3. Vedanta Vichara

4. Aroopa Dhyanam.

In Eka Roopa Dhyanam you meditate upon your Ishta devatha.

In Aneka Roopa Dhyanam you meditate upon the entire universe or Vishwa roopa.

First and second stages of Dhyanam are under Upana. Having practiced this for a sufficient period of time one enters Vedanta Vichara. Here one studies Vedanta under a qualified teacher then starts Aroopa Dhyanam. In Aroopa Dhyanam he discovers that Aroopa Ishvara is really meditation upon Myself or on the "Meditator".

The preparatory steps for any Dhyanam or Antaranga Sadhana are now described. In shastras eight steps are described, however, Swamiji says he has condensed it to four for simplicity's sake.

The four steps are:

1. Desha: The place of meditation. It should be clean, secluded and a spiritual place.
2. Kala: Time of meditation. Any time is fine. Early morning is a preferred time. One's mind should be Satvic (alert and quiet).
3. Asanam: Seat. One should not sit on a floor or hard or soft surface.
4. Sharira Sthithi: Condition of body and sense organs:
 1. Body should be straight and steady,
 2. Sense organs withdrawn,
 3. Breath, slow and smooth and
 4. In a Sanyasi mind. In this mental state one should not have relationship with anything other than the following three:
 1. Guru
 2. Shastra
 3. Ishwara.
5. Intellect: Must be convinced of the utility of

meditation.

Now you are ready for meditation. If possible, meditate after taking a bath.

Gita Chapter 6 describes this whole process of meditation as well. Posture should be erect, eyes directed at nose (not mind directed at nose). Breath, smooth and even. Mind in an attitude of Sanyasa.

Before starting meditation invoke Guru(s) and perform namaskaram. This reminds you of their teachings as you start meditation.

Shloka # 6:

One has to turn the mind to the heart.

Heart is compared to a Lotus flower. According to shastras heart is the place where mind resides, not in the brain. Within the heart the mind exists. In the mind you invoke Eka roopa, Aneka roopa and Aroopa. Lotus stands for purity. Mind must be like lotus, free from rajas, tamas, not wandering, not sleepy, in a sattvic state and with a cheerful countenance. May you invoke in the chest.

Up to this it is preparation.

Now the meditation itself is described. This is described in Gita chapter #6 as well. Flow of similar thoughts to the exclusion of dissimilar thoughts is meditation. In meditation flow of thought exists. It is not a thoughtless state. Any thought connected to the object of meditation or similar thoughts is appropriate.

1. **Aroopa Ishvara Meditation:** You must have studied Vedanta before this meditation. May you meditate upon the un-objectifiable Ishwara or Subject or Shiva Aham or Avyaktham (cannot be seen or known by sense organs), says Swamiji.

Shivam is used in shloka to mean all three states of meditation. Shivam is formless consciousness, peaceful, immortal, infinite, one without beginning or end, infinite cause of universe, fullness, knowledge and bliss, formless and the greatest wonder (that it is me).

If it were an object I would have stumbled upon it. In reality it "I", myself.

2) **Aneka Roopa Meditation:** That which appears in manifold form.

Mantra # 7:

3. **Eka Roopa meditation:** Mantra # 7 describes it. Here Lord Shiva is shown as object to meditate upon. It is only an example. It can be Vishnu, Ganesha or any other Ishvara.

Swamiji says Uma and Maheshvara are jointly called Umachi.

Shiva is described as the highest lord of creation, one who is omnipotent, with three eyes, blue necked, blue skied, and sitting in a meditative state.

The two eyes denote division, while third eye unites, symbolizing Advaita.

So, mediate upon shiva or any other Ishta Devatha. Eventually, one has to go through all three stages of Dhyanam.

What are the benefits of meditation?

The meditator will attain ye Lord himself. What type of Lord is he? What type of Ishwara? He is:

- 1) Jagat karana Ishwara, Bhutha Yoni.
- 2) Witness of entire creation,
- 3) All illuminating consciousness.

4) Beyond ignorance and Maya.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Kaivalya Upanishad, Class 5

Continuing his teaching on Kaivalya Upanishad Swamiji says, the student Ashvalayana approached Guru Brahmaji and asked for Brahma Vidya. This indicates maturity of the student. He does not ask for liberation, rather asks for Brahma Vidya. This is an important corollary as student is very clear that liberation can only be got through Brahma Vidya. Every student coming to Vedanta should know that it is the only means of getting knowledge and liberation. Knowledge is not an option in the path to liberation, as no other method is available. This should be very clear to any student. Draupadi thought, her five husbands or Bhishma and others would save her honor. They were all helpless. In this state, she called out to Sri Krishna. Her surrender was absolute. She even dropped her other hand holding her dress. Our commitment to Brahma Vidya should like Draupadi's. Then the heart will be ready to absorb the teaching. Moksha is possible only through Brahma Vidya.

So, what is the means to obtain Brahma Vidya or knowledge? There are not many methods. You have to use a mirror to properly see yourself. This mirror is the Guru Shashtra Upadesha. There is no other choice. Vedanta Sravanam, Mananam and Nidhidhyasanam are the only methods. Furthermore, our

approach to receiving the teaching must be whole hearted.

Brahmaji says: For Gyana Yoga to be fruitful conditions must be ideal for Gyanam. One essential quality is to possess Vairagyam or Thyaga. Renunciation is my mental preparation to handover to God all my possessions including my body, with thanks. This is called Ahamkara or Mamakara Tyagam or Vairagyam. Once this occurs Gyanam is produced. Gyanam then produces liberation.

The Process then is: Vedanta Study> Gyana Yoga> Gyanam> Moksha.

Shloka # 4: This is not a one day course or crash program. Initially in life, Dharma, Artha and Kama are the main focus with Moksha in the back-burner. Gradually Moksha gains priority. Then, it becomes a burning desire. At this stage one will sacrifice anything for it. Greater the desire, greater the sacrifice one is ready to make. This change in priority occurs gradually in life. Priority reshuffling is constantly happening in our lives. As my desire for Moksha increases my pursuit intensifies until it converges into one. Just like the sun's rays get focused under a lens. It is an evolutionary process.

Swamiji reminded us that a Grahastha usually chants Shloka's 3 and 4 together while welcoming a Sanyasi. This shloka also occurs in Mundaka Upanishad.

So, what are the stages?

- First step is, right direction is required. Our ultimate goal is Moksha. This requires Gyanam. Gyanam requires a prepared mind. To prepare a mind one requires Karma Yoga (Purity of mind) and Upasana (Attention of mind). So, the first step is scriptural study. Then right effort or proper effort or Karma Yoga is required. This will lead to a purified mind free of Raga and Dvesha. (Note: Attachments (raga) arise from our previous

experiences of pleasure and happiness. Aversions (dvesha) emerge from previous experiences of pain and suffering.)

- Second step is leading a life based upon what is proper and what is not proper or as a Dharmic person or as a Samskriitha (cultured person). Nithya Anithya Viveka must be there. Only Brahman can give fullness and lasting happiness. In this stage, there is less and less dependence on material world also called Shuddha Tatva.
- Sanyasa Yoga: This is the third stage. Once mind is mature, purpose of active life is served or complete. Work, work all the time is not the end of Vedas. At some point one has to turn to higher goals. This means reduction or renunciation or Sanyasa. One has to reduce or withdraw from activities. At this time Smaranam, Mananam and Nidhidhyanam is the goal. An active person cannot spend time in Smaranam, Mananam and Nidhidhyanam. The seeker also has to become introvert.

Brahma Vidya and Grihastha stages of life are > Extrovert.

Vanaprastha and Sanyasa stages are > Introvert.

So, during Sanyasa find quality time for Vedanta. You alone are immortal.

- The last stage is Sravanam, mananam and Nidhidhyanam for an extended period of time. Here we are trying to change the way of looking at the world or God. This is not easy. By committing to this, one becomes Brahma Nishta.

Vedanta Shatram gives self-knowledge, while Vedanta Artha is the crux. Central teaching of Vedanta is " I am ever free, I am ever full, still I am struggling to reach what I already am". Do not look outside.

Su-niscitarthah: means this teaching has to become a conviction.

Those people who have conviction about shastra, is the culmination of spiritual sadhana. Such people reach Jivan Mukti or become one with Brahman in this life. One gets absolute eternity.

Swamiji says Svarga is only a relative eternity. They continue in this world as long as Prarabdha Karma requires. The fall of a Gyani is called Parantakala or final death. Final death, because in an Agyani it is not final, he will be born again. For Agyani, it is intermittent death. In Gyani all three bodies (Sthula, Sukshma and Karana Shariras) are resolved. They merge with Brahman or Brahma Chaitanya.

Several religions lead to Chitta Shuddhi. However, ultimate knowledge should be: "Aham Poornaha".

Shloka # 5:

In previous three mantras Brahmaji taught Gyanam.

Now he teaches Dhyanam. Kailvalya does not teach Karma Yoga. It assumes the student has already gone through it. At the end of Kaivalya, Karma Yoga is briefly discussed.

In Gita's sixth chapter Dhyanmam is shown as two fold.

1. PreVedanta meditation is performed to make myself ready for Vedanta.
2. Post Vedanta meditation is performed to internalize whatever I studied, at the deepest level.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 27

Shloka # 52:

“When your intellect goes beyond the mist of delusion, you will win detachment from both what is to be heard and what has been heard.”

Shloka # 53:

“You will win this supreme yoga when your intellect, bewildered by Vedic texts, becomes firm and unwavering in concentration.”

In shlokas 52 and 53 respectively Sri Krishna concludes his summary of the basic teachings of a spiritual life as described by the vedas. All other chapters of Gita are a magnification of these two verses. This is the foundation upon which a 18-story edifice has been raised. Chapter 2, all verses 11-43 are very important, as are Jnana Yoga verses 11-25. One should try to memorize them and try to read them daily. All other chapters are based upon these verses. This will give you a strong foundation. Read these verses off and on. In this chapter, chapter 2, Karma Yoga and Gyana Yoga were described.

Karma yoga: is a religious life, where spiritual progress is important and while material life is not.

Gyana Yoga: The Karma Yogi's mind will mature to study Gyana Yoga or one's own Self. Just as a spectacle has got two goggles; the body and mind are like two media with which I interact. At the time of sleep, both the media, the body and the mind are resolved temporarily; and our transactions with the world stops. But even when the transactions stop, I continue to exist as a conscious being; a non-transacting conscious being. And Sri Krishna's contention is this conscious being is my true nature. Body and mind are just two

spectacles that are resolved in this knowledge of the Self.

I will still continue to exist as a Conscious Being. The body mind thought complex is only a temporary medium. "I" the pure consciousness will never die, while body and mind will come and go. This recognition is Self-knowledge. I know the body is not myself. It is a shell. This knowledge will then lead to Self-discovery.

Practice Karma yoga to know the mind. Practice Gyana Yoga to discover the Self. This is the essence of Gita.

All these are elaborated in future chapters. Here, now, Sri Krishna allows Arjuna to ask his questions.

Shloka 54:

Arjuna asks:

"How can a man of stable wisdom, anchored in concentration, be described, O Krsna? How does a man of steadfast intelligence speak? How does he sit? How walk?"

Arjuna is a practical man. He wants to know the practical value of the teachings. Will there be a benefit for me? Will it transform me, here and now?

Imagine a person who goes through the path of Karma yoga and then withdraws from all activities and then discovers his Self. He is totally satisfied as well. Such a person is a Gyani. Such a person is called a **Stitha Pragyaha**. **Stitha means freedom from all doubts. Pragyaha means Gyana.**

Another expression used to describe the same person is **Sama-dhitaha** or one with conviction or established in his true nature or Atma. Such a person is one who does not forget his true nature even in day-to-day activities. To such a person knowledge is easily accessible, as he does not forget the teaching at all, so much so that he maintains equanimity even in a crisis.

Sthitadhihi is another expression used to describe such a person. Dhihi means Gyanam. In such a person, "I am Atma", realization is a fact for him.

Thus, we have three definitions of an enlightened person.

Arjuna asks, Sri Krishna, what is description of such a Gyani? I would like to decide if this knowledge is useful to me or not. How will he talk to others, if at all? How will he sit? How will he walk? How does a Gyani conduct himself in the world? How does he think? How does he interact?

Swamiji clarifies that in this shloka the word Bhasha does not mean language but means description of Gyani. Swamiji also says that if there is no Guru, Sanyasa ashramam can be very dangerous, as Sanyasi will not know what to do with his time.

Shloka # 55:

Sri Krishna answered:

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

This is a very important shloka as it provides a definition of a Sthita Pragyaha.

Once we know characteristics of a Gyani, we have a model for all spiritual seekers. Shankaracharya says, whatever is a natural trait in a Gyani, it is a guideline for all Sadhakas. We can also check ourselves against the model. How am I to know if I have reached the goal?

Swamiji cautions: Use this portion only to judge yourself or change yourself, and not to judge others.

Sthitapragyaha sadhanani:

1. What are his natural traits?

2. What are the disciplines to be practiced, to become an Sthita Pragyaha?

Sri Krishna does not discuss all sadhanas here.

Swamiji says everybody has to go through Karma Yoga and Gyana Yoga. Gyana Yoga has three stages:

1. **Sravanam:** Receiving spiritual teaching from a competent teacher. This will help in Self Discovery. Scripture and Guru are like a mirror. They allow you to see your own "Inner Self" or Real Nature. Sravanam removes self-ignorance and helps with self-discovery. It is a mirror.
2. **Mananam:** Even as the student receives the teaching, several doubts come in his mind. **The teacher's goal is not to make the student believe. He wants the student to know. Knowing is different from believing.** Where knowing is involved, buddhi is involved; and buddhi will not accept something unless it is convinced. It should be logical. So, student is allowed to reflect and think about teaching. He can ask all questions, he wants. Therefore the second process of jnana yoga is asking my own intellect honestly, am I convinced? Of what? I am not the body, I am not the mind; but I am the eternal consciousness, functioning through the body and mind; Until and unless the student is convinced, the guru is ready for any amount of discussion. And this interaction and clarifying of all doubts is called mananam. This is the second important part of jnana yoga. By mananam, I remove all the intellectual obstacles. With this the knowledge has been converted into conviction; it is no more mere vague hypothesis or idea, but is a fact for me. Mananam removes intellectual obstacles.
3. **Nidhidysanam:** This intellectual knowledge has to be converted into emotional or psychological strength. It is the emotional personality that we use most of the time, not intellectual. We are disturbed by instances such as not getting coffee in time, car does not start,

somebody overtakes your car etc. You get angry and disturbed. Day to day life is a series of such disturbances. **One must free themselves from all unhealthy emotional responses.**

A person with a high IQ and a very good job came to Swamiji and cried for fifteen minutes. He had problems with his wife. He has IQ but no EQ. Emotional Quotient is a rock like mind that can withstand all disturbances. This involves a big conversion within. Converting knowledge to mental strength. This is called Nidhidhasana. Ask yourself what complexes do I have? In background of this knowledge how do I get over them? Somebody said, "Negatives are developed in dark room of ignorance." Once he goes through Nidhidhasanam he becomes Sthitha Pragyaha.

Thus, Sravanam and Mananam lead to Pragyaha. Nidhidhasanam makes him Sthitha pragyaha.

Such a mind is called Jivan Mukti. It is a light and non-burdensome mind. The Gyani is not aware of his own mind. Citing example: Swamiji says if body parts are healthy you do not feel them. Only when they are hurt you feel them. "When the shoe fits you do not feel the shoe" is a Chinese proverb. So also with mind, when it is not burdened you do not feel it.

The mind of a Sthitha Pragyaha is now described:

1. Such a person is self sufficient, self-content and does not require external factors emotionally. He might require external factors to provide for food, clothing, shelter, but as far as his emotional being is concerned, he is not going to go with a begging bowl, asking each and everyone, whether you will take care of me. His life is for giving love and care, but his life is not for begging for love and care. What a wonderful attitude. As long as I beg, there will be sanctions. You know what a

sanction is? It is constant blackmail. His life is not for begging, but for giving. He also does not depend on the physical condition of his own body.

2. Once there is fullness in oneself then there is renunciation of all expectations and desires.

Why do desires come? Why does a man look for a walking stick? One, whose legs are weak, needs a walking stick. So also it is with a family, such as wife, son and grandchildren. At each stage in life I feel "Appornatvam" or incompleteness. Gyani, however, does not see himself as incomplete.

He may use these things but he does not need them. Like going out for a walk with a baton. If he does not have the baton he will not fall. Although, he has people around him, he is not dependent on them. Manogatan, all these cravings of mind, torturing and inflicting pains, are cleaned up, not because desires are pushed away by suppression, rather desire drops with discovery of Poornatvam. It happens naturally. Just like when the fruit comes, all the flower petals fall away. Similarly, all these desires should fall, because of the discovery of poornatvam. Through knowledge these props fall away. So, Poornatvam is the second trait of a sthitapragyaha.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy