

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 Pragyaha 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 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