

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 23

Greetings All,

Chapter 2, Shloka 1:

Shanti patha:

Om. May he protect us both. May he help us both to enjoy the fruits of scriptural study. May we both exert together with enthusiasm to find the true meaning of the sacred texts. My our studies make us brilliant. My we never quarrel with each other. OM shani, Om shani, Om shanti.

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad Swamiji said, having completed chapter one of the Upanishad we are now entering the second chapter. It is the main chapter of the Upanishad. It talks about Vedanta shastra and as such is a very important chapter. Shankaracharya has written a beautiful commentary on this chapter. Chapters 1 and 3 do not deal with Vedanta and only deal with preparation or Sadhana Chatushtaya Samapthihi. Chapter 2 is beneficial only for one who has sadhana chatushtaya sampathihi. Chapters 1 and 3 are considered sadhana chapters. Chapter two is called by various names including: Brahnavalli, Anandavalli and Brahmanandavalli. It is known as Brahnavalli as the chapter begins with the word Brahma. It is known as Anandavalli as it discusses ananda or happiness and tells us how to obtain it. Since it deals with both Brahma and Ananda it is also called Brahmanandavalli. It begins with a separate shanti patha. Chapter 3 also uses the same shanti patha. The shanti patha is the famous manta “Sahana Vavatu, sahanau bhunaktu...” This mantra is also a part of Katho Upanishad.

The Essence of the Shanti patha:

This shanti patha is particularly relevant to Vedantic students. A mantra , such as, “bhadram karnebhi ..”, however,

can be used by all students, Vedantic and nonvedantic. Here the student asks God for five blessings. They are:

1. The knowledge of moksha is a result of my own sincere effort and is not determined by fate or God. There is a strong belief in free will or a belief in Purusharttha (self effort). Shashtra's do not support the idea that God knows what is best for me. Upanishad says it is more important that you know what is more important for yourself. I need to know first, and then God can help. Otherwise, I may even reject God's help.

This self-effort is very important. Having faith in myself is very important. This is the meaning of " Saha Veeryam Karava vahay."

2. Student has to study Vedanta for a length of time. Knowledge cannot be given in one sitting. It has to go through its building blocks. It is a long study. The length of study depends upon many factors. Vedanta is a study of Jiva, Jagat and Ishwara and it has to be built gradually.

Since it involves a developed teaching, student has to remember the past teaching in every class. Each class builds upon previous class. This is the reason why it is called a class and not a discourse. Taittiriya Upanishad has to be listened to, with a background in other Upanishads such as Katho, Kaivalya etc. **Student must be able to listen and retain, a power called Medha Shakti. In the shloka this is " Tejusvi nou adhitam astu".**

3. **Student prays for a healthy relationship between with the Guru.** The shloka says "Ma Vidhvishavahai". The relation with Guru must be one of love and respect. So, even if I do not accept a part of the teaching, still I give the benefit of doubt to the teacher. It means being open minded with shradha.

4. All must culminate in Gyanam. “ Saha Nau Avatu”. Citing example of football knowing the passing game is not enough for a team, we must be able to convert the pass into a goal as well. So, the student prays, “ **0 God, give me Gyanam.**”
5. He prays for Gyana Phalam. **I want to transform myself. I must be able to withstand the experiences of life with equanimity.** Between Gyanam and Pahalam there can be obstacles. The obstacles are mostly our emotional handicaps or Asuri Sampathi, qualities like kama, krodha, lobha etc. I wish to convert my knowledge to emotional stability. Subtle ragahas and dveshas can create problems for us. “ Saha Nau Bhunaktu” is the prayer in the shloka.

Thus the student asks for the five blessings of self-effort, ability to listen and retain, good relationship with teacher, blessing of Gyanam and blessing of transforming myself.

Chapter two is in prose. Upanishads are generally in Mantra or Brahmana form. Mantra is poetry or in metrical form. Brahmana is in prose form. Thus Mundaka Upanishad is in mantra while Taittiriya Upanishad is in prose.

The chapter two is divided into nine anuvakahas or sections.

Chapter 2, Anuvakaha 1, Shloka # 1.

Om, the knower of Brahman attains the Supreme. With reference to that, is the following hymn recited. Brahman is Truth, knowledge and infinity. He who knows It as existing in the cave of the heart in transcendent akasa, realizes all his desires along with omniscient Brahman.

This first section captures the entire teaching in a capsule form or in an aphorism or also called a Sutra.

The sutra here is: Brahnavit Apnoti Param. After the sutra comes the Vrithi or abbreviated notes or commentary on the

sutra. After the Vrithi, the rest of the chapter 2 is an elaboration on the sutra. This elaboration is also known as Vyakhyanam.

Explanation of Sutra:

Brahma Vit: Knower of Brahman. A Brahma Gyani attains Param or the highest goal of moksha or poornatvam or self-sufficiency or freedom from wants. The Tamil statement “Kurai onrum illai”, meaning, “I am without any wants”, is an apt description of this state.

Brhama Gyani alone attains moksha. People without Brahma Gyanam are Samsari's. They can be called ignorant ritualists or religious samsari's. Even a great upsaka of say Rama, Krishna or Devi will only be an Upasaka Samsari without Brahma Gyanam. Due to their upasana they may get powers but they will remain upsaka samsari. So, knowledge alone can get one his moksha.

There are many paths to purification of mind including: rituals, social service, bhajans etc., but there is only one path for Moksha and it is Gyanam.

It is our ignorance that causes us not to go after moksha. In Purana's there are stories of bhakta's that pray to God, “don't give me moksha, I just want to be in your presence all the time”. Swamiji says such a prayer to God is coming out of ignorance.

This sutra raises three questions.

- What is Brahman?
- How can I know Brahman? and
- What do you mean by Poornatvam or moksha prapthihi?

The three questions are answered in the vrithi's on sutra vakyam.

What is Brahman? Brahman has several meanings. Omkara is

called Brahman. A Brahmin by birth is called a Brahman. The Upanishad, defining Brahman, however says, Satyam, Gyanam and Anantam is Brahman.

How do you know Brahman? It has to be known within myself. It is not something I need to search outside.

The Upanishad answers these questions by quoting mantras from the Rig Veda, which is in the shloka. Taittiriya Upanishad is a Yajur Veda Upanishad while it is quoting a mantra from Rig Veda.

Shankara's commentary:

Shankaracharya has written a commentary on this "Sayam, gyanam, anantam brahman". He says it is a very important vakyam.

Brahman means the big one. What is big? Big is a relative word. When we say a big mosquito versus a big mountain each means different things. The Upanishad does not quantify how big the big is in the shloka. **So, we must understand it as unconditionally big or infinitely big. It is defined by the word Satyam.**

Anantam means limitless one or limitlessly big or infinite one. Anything has three limitations. They are:

- 1) Spatial;
- 2) Temporal and
- 3) Attribute or object limitation.

Brahman is free from space, time and objectivity limitations. This is the meaning of Anantam.

Spatial limitation means object is located in one place hence it cannot be in another place. Thus, presence in one place means not present in another place. So, Brahman is all

pervading and not limited by space.

Time limitation: If object exists only at a period in time, it is time limitation. Thus, someone who lived between 1912 and 1972, we can say he did not exist prior to 1912 and after 1972. Brahman, however, is eternal. It was always there and will continue to be there in future.

Object limitation: Brahman is not limited by another object. Consider a clip and a watch. Clip is not watch or a watch a clip.

The clip enjoys its clipness while watch enjoys its watchness. Since clip enjoys clipness and it enjoys only clipness, it is a clip. By being a clip it does not have any other “ness” such as watchness etc., that are excluded. Enjoying a “ness” is a limitation. Claiming to be a “man” deprives me of claiming to be any other object. If Brahman has to be free from this limitation it has to be non-dual or must possess second-lessness. This idea of being without the three limitations (space, time and object) is conveyed by Anantam.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bhagawat Geeta, Class 91:

Chapter 6, Verses 23 to 25

Greetings All,

Continuing his teaching of the Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, Sri Krishna has been talking about vedantic meditation as a means of assimilating self-knowledge. He does not prescribe meditation for gaining self-knowledge. Shankaracharya says self-knowledge can take place only from the teachings of a Guru. If one does not gain the knowledge by listening the first time one has to listen to it again and again, from the teacher, until it dawns in you. If this process requires another life (or lives) so be it. This is the only method of obtaining Atma Gyanam. Meditation is not prescribed for obtaining Atma Gyanam. Meditation is however accepted by the scriptures for assimilating Atma Gyanam. Citing an example it is the digested food that we assimilate into the body and not the amount of food that we eat. So what we listen to is not as important as to what we assimilate from listening. **It is the replaying of Sravanam that is Nidhidhyasanam.**

Steps of meditation are Dharana, Dhyanam and Samadhi. First withdraw mind from worldly personality. And bring the mind to vedantic teaching; this bringing the mind to the teaching is known as dharana; and then trying to dwell upon the teaching continuously is dhyanam; and then I am absorbed in the teaching, which talks about my higher nature, that I forget all my relative personality; this is Samadhi. One forgets family, relationships, friends etc., they all become incidental. In this stage only a thought such as Aham Brahma Asmi, Aham atma asmi etc., dominates.

As Wayne Dyer, beautifully says; **you are not a human being with a spiritual experience; but you are a spiritual being with an incidental human experience.** Do not look for a spiritual experience; when you are looking for a spiritual

experience you are just a human being seeking a spiritual experience. That is the worst that can happen.

On the other hand, through teaching, what we have to assimilate is: I do not seek spiritual experience, I want to own up to the fact that I am a spiritual being, all the time; while the human experience is something which comes and goes.

The steps of meditation of dharana, dhyana samadhi culminates in a state of total absorption. One is absorbed in "satchidanda svarupah asmi". This absorption is called nirvikalpaka Samadhi. Nirvikalpaka samadhi is the phalam of ashtanga yoga.

Sri Krishna is giving seven definitions of nirvikalpa Samadhi from different perspectives.

1. **Chitta Uparamanam:** in which the mind is totally relaxed, tranquil, at home, at peace and at poise. Chitta means mind, and uparamanam means quietude. It is not a thoughtless mind, but one without disturbance. Thoughts should not disturb. Knowledge is also a thought but not a disturbance. You can have thoughts with a quiet mind. Nidhidhyasanam is a quiet mind with Vedantic thoughts or it is quiet due to Vedantic thoughts.
2. **Atma Darshanam:** is a state in which one invokes, in his mind, the knowledge he has received. The knowledge received is that: I am not the body, I am not the sense, I am not the mind, and I am the consciousness principle, different from the body, pervading and illumining the body. This owning up to my own nature is atma darshanam. This was the second definition.
3. **Atyanta sukham:** It means the highest happiness, in which I own up to the fact that my very nature is happiness. It is not an experiential happiness. Experiential happiness is finite, because it is time bound. This is a happiness born out of the knowledge that I do not miss anything in life; I do not lack anything in life; I do

not have any imperfection; this very understanding gives me a sense of fulfillment. This knowledge born fulfillment is called atyantika sukham.

4. **Tatva nishta:** Which means that it is a state in which a person abides in his true nature; that he will not slip out of his svarupam even during transaction. So this is called not losing the center of gravity. The center of gravity is aham satchidanandasvarupah. This is called tattva nishta or also sahaja samadhi.
5. **Atyantika Labha:** it is the greatest and latest accomplishment in life. It is coming back to myself after going in search of peace all over and discovering that peace and fullness is my very nature. So, a person who discovers his svarupam has got a sense that I have come back. So this is called atyantika labha the highest gain in life.
6. **Atyantika dukha nivriti:** that gaining which a person does not know how to grieve in life; there is no more sorrow in life; even the worst crisis does not shake him; because he is very clearly aware that the whole anatma consists of body-mind and the world. This anatma is unpredictable and fluctuations will take place anytime. At the physical level any kind of change including death can occur at any time.

He is aware that similar changes can occur at the mental as well as world level as well. He is aware of anatma and is mentally prepared for all eventualities. Nothing comes as a shock for him. His initial reaction to a situation may be "what?" but it is soon converted to "so what?" He recovers very quickly. This is the sixth definition, atyantika dukha nivritih or total freedom from sorrow.

Now Sri Krishna provides the seventh definition in the next shloka.

Shloka # 23:

[illegible]

It is a technical definition to avoid confusion. Confusion can come from third definition of Athyantika Sukham. One may think knowledge and Samadhi will bring the highest happiness. This is a mistake as anything that comes in time will also be lost in time.

Therefore even mystic bliss if it arrives, it is subject to time, and therefore Krishna wants to say that, infinite ananda should be that which never arrives. If it should be infinite ananda; it should never arrive at a place, or time or in particular condition; infinite ananda is possible only if it is already here and now. Infinite by definition is that which is here and now.

Every sorrow is unnatural. It belongs to body, mind or world and none of them is your nature. Hence the shloka, Chidananda rupaha shivahom shivoham. **Dissociation from association is**

ananda. We have associated with sorrow due to ignorance. And, therefore, **samadhihi is dissociation from association with sorrow.** We have associated ourselves with sorrow, because of our ignorance, and that wrong association we now give up.

We do not develop a new association with happiness because we need not associate with happiness since happiness happens to be our svarupam. **So the seventh definition of nirvikalpika Samadhi is dissociation from sorrow.**

Now Sri Krishna gives advise to Vedantic students. One should practice this yoga of Bahiranga sadhanani, Antaranga sadhanani and meditation. Only practice will transform a personality. One should practice with perseverance. We must practice meditation without a depressed mind. Keep in mind that in meditation our worries come up. Never get frustrated. Work on meditation with an optimistic mind.

Shloka # 24:

सर्वकामसंन्यासोऽसौ ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगिनाम्
सर्वद्वन्द्वविमोक्षोऽयं योगसंन्यासः॥६.२४॥

Giving up wholly all desires born of mental constructions and controlling, on all sides, the senses with the mind.

Sri Krishna talked about dhyana phalam in these verses, beginning from shloka 20 up to shloka 23. Sri Krishna is not totally satisfied and therefore once again he goes back and talks about dhyana svarupam for what is to be done in meditation for our reinforcement.

He says turn mind away from worldly thoughts, both past and future.

The word Kama in shloka means future plans or expectations. We rarely live in the present. Everyday I prepare for tomorrow. For 20 minutes, every day, drop your plans for the future. And, how to do that? Any thought at its beginning stages is

not powerful. It arrives feebly like a ripple in a lake. Then, with support of wind, the ripple becomes a wave. We keep thinking of the same subject and reinforcing it. So, don't let thought linger. Anger, jealousy etc., are all thoughts built up. Repeated thinking creates anger. So, in its seed stage itself divert the thought away.

Then withdraw the sense organs, which are the gateways, through which the external world enters your mind and disturbs. Then close the gate so that external world does not enter your mind. With the help of your mind itself withdraw from the external world totally. Indriyagram in shloka means group of indriyas. Gram means cluster. Viniyam means withdraw.

Shloka # 25:

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Withdraw gradually, with the help of the resolute intellect;
anchoring the mind in the Self, think of nothing whatsoever.

Withdrawal must be done gradually. Atma is the subtlest nature of mind. Mind can't turn from gross to subtle immediately. There will be intermediate stages. Make mind subtler and subtler. Move mind away from gross. The whole world is given to you for your inner growth.

Mind dwells upon a object due to which we have either aham abhimana, or mama abhimana; I am yours; you are mine. In reality nothing is yours,

nothing is mine; everything belongs to God alone. We

are fundamentally related to God or Paramatma; that is the only permanent tie that we have, the moment I put that in my mind, attachment is dropped and there is a relaxation. Once you have withdrawn, the mama abhimana goes away.

Nobody is indispensable. You cry for a few days after a month

you have even forgotten that person. While body is mine, it is also anatma.

And therefore withdraw from the external world; then coming to the body dismiss the body as anatma. It is only made of matter; therefore you withdraw from world to annamaya kosa; annamaya kosa to pranamaya; pranamaya to manomaya; manomaya to vigyanamaya; vigyanamaya to anandamaya. Body is gross; mind is subtle, mind is gross, consciousness is subtle.

I am not thought or mind; although, I am aware of thought and mind. I am not thought. I am witness consciousness. This must be done gradually to withdraw from all five koshas.

In mind don't be lost in thought rather becomes the witness consciousness. Once mind is in Atma, let it dwell there. Let it dwell on the features of Atma such as: I am the consciousness, which goes beyond the body; I am the formless consciousness; I am uncontaminated consciousness etc.

Hence, meditation is not possible without knowledge from a guru. Dwell even on a word such as: Aham Apanga.

How to do it?

Mind should remain in atma. What does it mean? Atma is all pervading. Mind is not away from atma. Nothing is away from atma. So, placing the mind means entertaining the thought of atma or centered on atma. Thus, thinking of Badrinath means your thoughts are on Badrinath. So, mind should have thoughts centered on atma. Thoughts such as: Aham brahma asmi. Even when thoughts are changing, I don't change. This is called akhanda akara vrithi or atma centered thoughts. **Flow of atma thought to the exclusion of anatma thought is meditation.**

Take away:

1. I do not seek spiritual experience, I want to own up to the fact that I am a spiritual being, all the time,

while the human experience is something which comes and goes.

2. The seventh definition of nirvikalpika Samadhi is dissociation from sorrow. (shloka # 23).
3. Dissociation from association with sorrow is ananda.
4. In mind, don't be lost in thought rather becomes the witness consciousness.
5. Flow of atma thought to the exclusion of anatma thought is meditation.
6. It is the replaying of Sravanam that is Nidhidhyasanam.
7. You are not a human being with a spiritual experience; but you are a spiritual being with an incidental human experience.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy

Bhagawat Geeta, Class 85: Chapter 6; Verses: 9 and 10

Swamiji summarizes Lord Krishna's discussion thus far:

1. The topic of Bahiranga saadhana. These are the general disciplines to be observed by a person who wants his

meditation to be successful.

2. Samatvam (equanimity) as one discipline, the importance of self-confidence, self-effort and self-integration of various personalities (the physical, the psychological, the intellectual). If a person takes care of all these disciplines, then the self-knowledge is very easy.
3. Krishna then mentioned the benefit of gaining the self-knowledge. This comes in the form of a total change of one's perspective of the world. According to Vedanta, the world does not have an intrinsic capacity to bind, to persecute, torment or disturb an individual. The individual gives the power to the world to disturb them. This occurs when a person has an unhealthy perspective of the world. The perspective is in your hands!

Chapter 6 Sloka 9

योगीश्वर उवाच ॥ समं द्रष्टुं शक्यं हि सर्वं भूतैर्गुणैश्च ॥
समं हि द्रष्टुं शक्यं हि सर्वं भूतैर्गुणैश्च ॥ ६.९ ॥

योगीश्वर उवाच ॥ समं द्रष्टुं शक्यं हि सर्वं भूतैर्गुणैश्च ॥ in the
goodhearted, in friends, in enemies, in the indifferent, in
neutrals, in haters, and in relatives ॥ समं हि द्रष्टुं शक्यं हि सर्वं भूतैर्गुणैश्च ॥ in the righteous
॥ also ॥ and ॥ समं हि द्रष्टुं शक्यं हि सर्वं भूतैर्गुणैश्च ॥ in the unrighteous ॥ समं हि द्रष्टुं शक्यं हि सर्वं भूतैर्गुणैश्च ॥ one who has
equal mind ॥ समं हि द्रष्टुं शक्यं हि सर्वं भूतैर्गुणैश्च ॥ excels.

The yogis look upon all—well-wishers, friends, foes, the pious, and the sinners—with an impartial intellect. The yogi who is of equal intellect toward friend, companion, and foe, neutral among enemies and relatives, and impartial between the righteous and sinful, is distinguished among humans.

In this verse, Krishna says, not only does a jnaani have samtvam regarding inanimate objects, he has the sama darshanam regarding the living beings as well. Equanimity towards the living beings is more difficult, esp. with human living beings. When we befriend a person, we develop raga, dvesha, krodha, etc. Krishna has given a wide range of human beings.

शुद्धात्मा means by his very nature he is a well-wisher of everyone and will help anyone without any conditions or expectations.

शुद्धात्मा another good person but this person is a conditional helper – helps only when the other is a known person.

द्वेषी (not seen separately due to the sandhi) means enemy

निष्कामः means an indifferent person. He does not harm nor do any good. मध्यस्थः a mediator.

विरुद्धः one who is hateful; one who provokes hatred by his behavior

सम्बन्धः a relative; connected by family relation.

शुद्धः a noble person who follows dharma. शुद्धात्मा means a person doing good to others. A शुद्धः is a person leading a life of values, whether an opportunity arises to help others or not.

अशुद्धः one who leads a life of अधर्म – an unrighteous person.

These are the various types of people. A jnaani's attitude towards all of them is equanimity.

How can you see all the people equally when one person is a saint and another a criminal? The शुद्धात्मा must be understood very well. This was discussed in Chapter 5, Verse 18 as शुद्धात्मा शुद्धात्मा शुद्धात्मा |

Swamiji explains शुद्धात्मा again.

शुद्धात्मा can be looked at from two angles:

- the philosophical and
- freedom from raga-dvesha.

The philosophical angle means that a jnaani looks at the true nature of everyone. This is the atma-svaroopam. All the differences in character belongs to the anatma or the body-

- **Alone** alone; try to be alone.
- Let the place be spiritually and physically clean. The space should be associated with spirituality; puja room, temple, ashrama etc.

Stage 2: **Kaala NiyamaH** (Krishna does not mention this).

- **Early morning** Early morning is ideal for meditation. But the ideal time for meditation is when you are relaxed and not sleepy.

Stage 3: **Aasana**

- **Where should you be seated?** You can sit on a chair if you are not able to sit on the floor. The main aim is the mind!
- Every meditator should have his/her own aasanam. It should be neither too soft nor too hard. Neither too high nor too low.

Stage 4: **Shareera SthitaH; Posture of the body**

- You should sit steadily; Keep the neck and head straight and relaxed

Stage 5: **Praanasaamyam**

- **Even breathing.** The breathing should be relaxed and smooth.

Breathing and our thoughts are interconnected.

Stage 6: **Indriya NigrahaH; Sensory restraint**

- **Sense organs** can influence the mind since every sense organ is a gateway in which the world enters the mind.
- Krishna says to withdraw the sense organs by turning the mind away.
- Krishna specifically mentions the eyes – the most powerful sense organs. If the eyes are open, all the

things seen enter the mind and triggers the thoughts to wander. When the eyes are closed, by laws of association, we tend to sleep. Krishna says, let the eyes be half-closed, as though you are looking at the tip of your nose.

Stage 7: मनु निग्रहः Mano NigrahaH; Withdrawal of the mind

- The mind must be withdrawn from mundane things; all the worldly roles you play in life as husband/wife/neighbor/mother etc. Each role has its set of anxieties and worries.
- For 15 minutes, shed all your roles. Become a sanyasi mentally. Relate to God or your Guru. These are the two relationships that have no problems.

Invoke the Guru. By law of association, you are reminded of the teachings. The relationship to the guru is in the context of teaching. Withdraw your mind; surrender to the Lord.

Stage 8: बुद्धि निश्चयः Buddhi NishchayaH

- Conviction regarding the necessity and utility of meditation. It should not be a mechanical routine. Need to meditate whole-heartedly, knowing the role of meditation.

With this conviction, sit in meditation, withdraw the sense organs; withdraw the mind. Now, you are fully available for meditation. These 8 steps are not meditation but specific preparation, called antaranga saadhanaani. The details will be discussed in the next class.

Taitreya Upanishad Class 21

Greetings All,

Shlokas # 6, 7 and 8:

Chapter 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 6:

Now, if there should arise any doubt regarding your acts or any uncertainty in respect of your conduct in life, you should act in those matters exactly as those Brahmanas who are present there, who are thoughtful, religious (experienced), not set on by others, not cruel (i.e. gentle) and are devoted to dharma.

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad Swamiji said, there is a general complaint that Hinduism is the most confusing religion in the world. Moreover, this criticism comes from Hindus themselves. They feel, compared to Hinduism, all other religions are far less confusing Swamiji says, there is some truth in this statement. Whatever is presented as inferior in Hinduism, the very same ideas also make it superior as well. So we should know about the so-called weaknesses of Hinduism as well as how they are also its greatness.

First: Hinduism has voluminous scriptures. It is said to be so vast that a person studying them 24X365 for years may not be able to complete them. It is said that Bharadwaja Rishi studied scriptures for 100 years and then asked Indra to give him boon of continuing his studies in the next birth, from birth itself, as well. Thus, he is supposed to have studied the scriptures for 300 lives at which point he asked Indra how much more he had to go? Indra picked up a handful of mud from a mountain and said you have a long ways to go. Indra also said the Vedas are infinite. Out of 1008 scriptures we have found only six of them. So, this can be a positive or negative aspect of Hinduism. To understand a part from the whole one must have an awareness of the whole. This is the discovery

allopathic medicine made that while treating a part one has to consider the whole body as well the psychosomatic aspects as well.

But to know the whole you have to study each part of it as well. To study Gita, one has to study each shloka. We also need to know details of each shloka. So, to know any part of Hinduism one has to have an understanding of the totality of Vedic vision, but the scriptures are too voluminous for that. This is thus a weakness as well as positive aspect of the religion.

Second: Scriptures do not address any specific human being or group rather they address the many layers of seekers. Thus, many Varnas (Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra) and many ashramas (Brahmacharya, Grihasta, Vanaprasta, Sanyasa), are all addressed. From the grossest (spiritually) to the most evolved are addressed. So, if we do not understand which part is meant for who it can become a problem. It is like a doctor asking one person to eat well while advising another to fast. Vedic teaching is thus directed to different adhikari's. In some places puja is glorified while in another it is not. Karma is considered great in some while elsewhere it is not. In Mandukya Upanishad Gaudapada says it is unfortunate that people are committed to Ishwara Upasana. Gaudapada also criticizes religion, Ishwara etc., causing confusion. So, it is seemingly full of contradictions; a negative on one hand; on the other hand it addresses all levels, even a tribal can follow it; which is a positive. Thus, even Ishwara is described as Aroopa, Eka Roopa, and Aneka Roopa. So, which Ishwara Roopa is correct? It is a complex teaching.

Third: Ethics and Morality: At superficial level we can discern ethics and morality. However, at deeper level, there are more gray areas also known as Dharma Sankata. Thus, what is my duty as a husband may conflict with my duty as a father? Scriptures give us a lot of stories that illustrate Dharma Sankata; we are supposed to learn from them and take our

lesson. Citing example of Rama, when he asked Sita to go to the forest, he had a conflict between the role of husband and role of ruler. Another example: a middle class person has an aged parent who needs expensive treatment while he also has a son who has to pay an expensive fee for a college admission. Where should he spend his limited money? This is dharma Sankata. Was Vibhishana correct or Kumbhakarna? The epic, Ramayana, stresses that neither Vibhishana nor Kumbhakarna strayed from the path of Dharma and that there is no single way out of a moral dilemma. Ramayana teaches that Kumbhakarna adhered to the Dharma of loyalty to his kin when his advice fails, while Vibhishana chose to oppose his kin when his advice failed.

Thus, there are a lot of gray areas. Scriptures can only guide us. There are subjective areas. In Gita as well, Sri Krishna says ahimsa is very important, therefore Arjuna should fight. While Gita teaches Satyam as a value Sri Krishna himself obfuscates the truth in many instances. Scriptures appear to be vague. Dharma is relative and not absolute.

Fourth: Scriptures were given to man a long, long, time ago. They did not imagine all situations that we face. Citing an example: For learning driving one can be taught some traffic situations. The reality is that in India all possible traffic situations are faced. Thus, we face buffaloes, pot holes etc., to name a few. Scriptures do not mention many situations. So, interpretation is required. Citing another example, consider that in many homes the toilet and bathroom are together. As per shastras one is a place for shaucham while other is a place for ashucham. Both are not supposed to be together. However, the house is usually small and both have to be placed together. So, heavy interpretation is required.

Finally: Method of interpretation is per sampradaya or mimasa, which we never study. We cannot interpret on our own. Shatras have built-in interpretation and the Gurus's presented this to students. That is a reason why scriptures were not printed. It

was always passed on in an oral tradition. Under the oral tradition, one could not perform self-study. You always needed a teacher. However, due to western influences it is now printed but there is no one to help interpret them.

So, now, we go an original text without a key. Vedas used exaggeration. Thus, the story of Ajamila is that he was a Brahmin who fell into sinful ways, but at moment of death he chanted Narayana. He was actually calling for one of his sons. But his Narayana chant took him to God. Thus, in Kali Yuga, Nama smaranam is considered a path to liberation. These are considered exaggerations of shastras. However, because they are publicized today, without interpretation, they are causing confusion. To not to be confused one has to learn under a Guru or go to a person who can interpret. Then, Hinduism will not be confusing. The interpreter has to be a Guna Brahmana, an empath and one who is a dharma-moksha pradhana. Once you learn from them your conscience will become shastra oriented. Then, it will give you the right answer. One has to be free of Raga and Dvesha to be able to interpret Shastra.

Chapter 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 7:

And now with regards to those who are falsely accused of some crime; you should rule yourself exactly in the same manner as do the brahmanas who are present there, who are thoughtful and religious, not set on by others, not cruel, and are devoted to Dharma.

Our doubts are usually related to conduct or rituals. Veda cites an example. Suppose you have a friend. Then, you come to know from other sources that he is not an ethical person. The question is should I drop him? Shastra say one should drop an unethical person. What should I do? So, find a brahmana interpreter and see if he associates with your friend? Or ask the interpreter about your dilemma and ask him what you should do? Seek their guidance related to dharma shastras.

Chapter 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 8:

This is the command. This is the teaching. This is the secret of Vedas. This is the commandment. This should be observed. Verily, having understood this fully, one must act in the way taught above, continuously till the last and not otherwise.

If one does not follow this advise of shastra, we will lose. The essence of Vedas, Veda Poorva, is enshrined in Anuvakha # 11. Following the commandments of Anuvakaha # 11 is considered following the dharma shastra itself. These are the commandments of God. It is a commandment because if you violate it then you suffer in Samsara. This is not an optional commandment. It is a requirement of Vedas. So, lead a life as per Anuvakaha # 11.

Chapter 1, Anuvakaha # 12, Shloka # 1:

Concluding Shantipatha.

May Mitra (sun) be good to us. May Varuna be good to us. May Aryama be good to us. May Indra and Brihaspathi be good to us. May all pervading Vishnu be good to us. Prostrations to the Brahman. Prostration to thee, O Vayu. Thou, indeed, art the visible Brahman. Thee I have declared the “right”. Thee I have declared the “good”. That has protected me. That has protected the teacher.

Now the shanti patha is chanted. It is a Thank you. There are some differences between the invocation shloka (chapter 1, anuvakha 1, shloka 1) and this ending shanti patha.

You have blessed us. We could complete the teaching. So, thank you. With this the Om Shanti is repeated three times. The Om Shanti is said to remove obstacles to Sravanam, Mananam and Nidhidhyasanam.

Take Away:

Dharma is relative and not absolute.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bhagawat Geeta, Class 90, Chapter 6: Verses 20 to 22

Greetings All,

Continuing his teaching of the Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, Sri Krishna has been talking about vedantic meditation that closely follows Ashtanga Yoga. Now he talks about the actual process of meditation and its culmination. As discussed in last class, culmination of meditation is the mental absorption in flow of similar thoughts also called Sajathiya pratyaya pravaha. In vedantic meditation, the

flow of thought should be dealing with the very nature of atma; and atma has got different features as we saw in the previous chapters, you can change the thought from one feature of atma to another feature of atma; but you should not change from atma to any other object.

Thus, Atma's features were discussed in chapters 2, 4 and 5 respectively. These features include: atma chaitanya svarupah; atma nityah; atma ekah and atma sarvagathah. The features were detailed in shlokas 12-25, chapter 2.

Vedantic meditation is impossible without having studied under a Guru. A non-vedantic student cannot perform Atma dhyanam.

That is why Sri Krishna is introducing the topic after five chapters. Non-Vedantic students can, however, perform Upasana Dhyanam. Swamiji said we would have a guided meditation at the end of this chapter as well.

A vedantic student has learned the different features of atma from the guru and guru has pointed out how atma is the nature of consciousness. Thus, Atma is nitya, satyah, sarvagatah; asangah; ekah, akarta; nirvikarah and abhokta. All these he has heard and understood.

If the student has not understood enough about the Atma, then he or she should listen to the teacher again. The student has to re-live the teaching. You can recollect only if you have been taught. **Meditation is recollecting and remembering all his teachings.** I am witness of thought; I am the changeless consciousness etc. When my mind dwells on the Atma (or any specific object) continuously it is called Sajathiya Pratyaha Pravaha. In time this dwelling becomes stronger and effortless as well.

This process of dwelling of the mind in Atma has three stages as per Yoga shastra.

1. First is collecting the mind and pulling thoughts together is Dharana.
2. Then comes Dhyana
3. Lastly comes Samadhi. Here there are two types of Samadhi. One is called Savikalpa and the other Nirvikalpa (spontaneous absorption without any will power). Nirvikalpa Samadhi is the culmination of Ashtanga Yoga. The first eight steps of Ashtanga Yoga are called anga's. The ninth is called angi, the goal, or Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Sri Krishna is discussing this Samadhi in shlokas 20-23. Sri Krishna provides seven definitions of Samadhi even as he discusses their phalam.

Shloka # 20:

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When through the practice of Yoga the motionless mind withdraws (from objects) and rejoices in the Self, beholding the Self by one's inner sense.

In this shloka two definitions are given.

First definition of Samadhi is that it is Chitta Uparamanam or total relaxation of mind. That is why the word samadhi is given different Sanskrit derivations; and one derivation given is sama dheehi yasmin saha; Samadhi. Sama means equanimous; tranquil, like a waveless lake. Kalidasa compares a lake to the mind of a gyani. In those days there were many Gyani's. Thus, Manas Sarovar means a lake like a mind of a Gyani.

How to tranquilize the mind? It is Chittam Nirudham or withdrawal of mind from the world that tranquilizes the mind. It means withdrawal of all roles such as of father, mother, worker etc. This is withdrawing the mind from An-atma prapancha. Keep in mind Shankaracharya's shloka:

na mē mr̥tyuśamkā na mē jātibhēdaḥ

pitā naiva mē naiva mātā na janma .

na baṁdhurna miṭraṁ gururnaiva śiṣyaḥ

cidānaṁdarūpaḥ śivō:'haṁ śivō:'haṁ .. 5

No bandhu; no mitram; no father; no mother. Come out of all relationships during meditation. This is called niruddham chittam.

Practicing it is a way of transforming life. Practicing Ashtanga Yoga's path of: Yama, Niyama ,Asana, Pranayama and Prathyahara will transform you. In these five steps one is

following Antaranga and Bahiranga sadhanani. Here, the mind reaches a stage of deep silence.

Second:

Atmanam Pashyan: Silencing the mind is not our aim. Silencing only gives temporary tranquility. Having silenced the mind, bring vedantic teaching into the silent mind. Thus, consider bringing the following mantra to mind:

manōbuddhyahamkāraccittāni nāham

na ca śrōtrajivhē na ca ghrāṇanētrē .

na ca vyōmabhūmiḥ na tējō na vāyuḥ

cidānaṁdarūpaḥ śivō:'ham śivō:'ham .

Know the meaning of the mantra and meditate on it. One should see the Atma, as revealed by the Guru and shastras during sravanam of Vedanta; hence the need for Vedanta sravanam. Without it, Vedanta dhyanam is not possible.

Where does he see the Atma? He sees it in his mind by recollecting the teaching of his Guru. This is vedantic meditation. **It is like a cow chewing the cud.** And in shloka atmanam means the atma; atmani means the mind; and atmana, means with the help of the mind itself. **So, with help of mind see the Atma, in mind itself.** Here you see Atma as a Sakshi. **Atma darshanam is second definition of Samadhi.**

What benefit do I get? Suppose you have a clock. Do you notice its ticking during day time; Probably not. But at night, in bed, you can hear it clearly. Nothing changed with the clock. In daytime the outside disturbances overpower. In Nidhidhyasanam all other noises are removed. In Nidhidhyasanam, when I recollect the teaching, it has more impact. Thus, the teaching becomes stronger. Citing another example, on poornami day, at daytime, it is difficult to see the moon. But once it gets dark, you see the full moon. Did

the moon suddenly brighten? No. In daylight, the moonlight was obscured and at night it became clear.

Similarly, during shravanam itself; knowledge does take place; every student gets the Teaching. In nidhidhyasanam he brings the same teaching into a silent mind; in a withdrawn mind, then the teaching becomes more powerful. Here Gyanam becomes Gyana nishta. It is strongly registered; and therefore the **second definition can be called atma darshanam.**

The benefit one obtains is that one feels joy of poornatvam.

Shloka # 21:

योगिनो यदात्मनि
सर्वसंसारमोक्षं
ब्रह्मसंज्ञायां 6.21

When the Yogin experiences the endless bliss beyond the senses, that may be grasped only by the intellect, becomes steadfast and does not move away from the Truth.

In this shloka, two more definitions are provided.

Third definition: One owns up to the highest ananda. Ananda is different from experiential sense pleasures in every way including space and time. Every experiential pleasure is time bound. Thus, the telling that I enjoyed music on that day is in the past tense. Any experiential sense pleasure is bound by time, place and quality of experience. Ananda is not an experiential pleasure. If it is ananda only in Samadhi, then it is also an experiential pleasure, since once you come out of Samadhi you come back to normal state.

It is ananda when it is born out of knowledge. I am poornaha, I was and I will be. Even outside of meditation, I will be poornaha. It is a permanent state of knowledge that cannot be displaced by anything. It remains with us, in both happiness and unhappiness. This sense of fulfillment born out of knowledge is called Atyantikam sukham; the limitless ananda.

It is a state that is beyond sense pleasures.

So, the third definition is Atyantika Sukham.

Then comes the fourth definition in the second line. Remaining in this; in this absorption; or abiding in this atma; one does not deviate into anatma; Citing example of cycling, when you are learning, somebody holds you. Later you get to bike on your own. Then you start cycling without even thinking about it anymore. This is called Nishta. One who practices this will never come out of it even in transactions. Actually after this, life becomes a drama. You realize you are not a beggar in the green room. Going to the green room is Nidhidhyasanam. Whatever be the transaction, he does not forget his core or center of gravity.

If during the transaction one does not deviate, it is called Sahaja Samadhi. When I deliberately practice it, it is samadhi; when effortlessly I am in it, it is sahaja samadhi. It is like one driving the cycle without worrying about the cycle.

Fourth definition of Samadhi is that one, who is in it, is a Tatva nishta or Sthita pragyaha.

Shloka # 22:

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That prize, winning which one deems no other greater; established in which, one is not overpowered even by grievous pain.

Here Sri Krishna gives two more definitions. Once, one owns up poornatvam, I don't lack or need anything. Swamiji cited the tamil saying "Kurai onrum illai, Nirai iruku". The saying means "I am full and I have everything." Since I don't miss anything, whatever I enjoy due to my punyam, they will all be

luxuries. **What is luxury? It is which you enjoy when you have it but don't miss when not available.**

Need is that you don't recognize when it is there. But once you don't have it you realize the need.

Citing example of car , one who has no car does not consider it a necessity as he is used to travel by public transportation. However, one who has grown up using a car, for him car is a necessity. This is the difference between luxury and need; luxury is that whose presence you enjoy; whose absence, you do not miss; need is that whose presence you do not recognize, whose absence you very badly feel.

For a Gyani everything in life is a luxury. When they are not there he does not miss them. Sanyasi's in Hrishikesh live on Bhiksha. They are used to it. Then tourists come. They want to feed the Sanyasi's with puri, halwa etc. Sanyasi's enjoy it knowing the next day they will be back on Roti and Dal.

So Sri Krishna says yam labdhva, having owned up this purnatvam, all the other aims in life; all other accomplishments become insignificant.

Therefore, the fifth definition of Samadhi is athyantika labhah. It is the highest gain in front of which all the other gains are insignificant.

They become insignificant in face of poornatvam.

Sixth definition: Remaining in Atma Nishta one is not shocked or shaken by the worst tragedy in life. Reacting to a situation, he says "What? When he hears about it at first, then changes to " so what"? He knows everything in life is subject to arrival and departure.

In shloka, the word guru is not a noun; rather it is an adjective, meaning, even by the heaviest sorrow.

The sixth definition of Samadhi here is atyantika dukhena

nivriithhi or total freedom from sorrow.

Take away:

1. Vedantic meditation is recollecting and remembering all of Guru's teachings.
2. First definition of Samadhi is total relaxation of mind.
3. Second definition of Samadhi is with help of mind see the Atma, in mind itself.
4. Third definition of Samadhi is Atyantikam sukham or limitless ananda. It is a state that is beyond sense pleasures.
5. Fourth definition of Samadhi is remaining in this absorption; or abiding in this atma; one does not deviate into anatma;
6. The fifth definition of Samadhi is athyantika labhah or obtaining poornatvam. It is the highest gain in front of which all the other gains are insignificant.
7. The sixth definition of Samadhi is atyantika dukhena nivriithhi or total freedom from sorrow.
8. Luxury versus need: luxury is that whose presence you enjoy; whose absence, you do not miss. Need is that whose presence you do not recognize, whose absence you very badly feel.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy

Baghawat Geeta, Class 89, Chapter 6, Verses 18 and 19

Greetings All,

Continuing his teaching of the Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, after discussing the general and specific preparations to be taken care of before meditation, now, Sri Krishna is talking about the actual process of meditation itself. The process of meditation includes dharana, dhyanam and samadhi. Dharana is focusing mind on object of meditation. This focusing happens only as a relevant thought modification. Thus, focusing on a tree means that tree is the object. In Sanskrit, we call it vriksha akara vritti; vriksha means tree; akara means the form of an object & vritti means a thought modification. So when I entertain vriksha akara vritti, my mind is focused on vrikshah; Ghatakara vritti is focusing on ghatah. Ishvara akara vritti is focusing on Ishvara and atmakara vritti is focusing on Atma

And after that, try to retain the flow of the same thought. Thus, vriksha akara vritti can stand for a moment alone, because every thought has got only a momentary life. No thought can exist continuously; it has only a momentary existence. Therefore, in Dhyanam, what I try, after entertaining vriksha akara vritti, is to have the next vritti also as vriksha akara vritti and continuing with the same thought. This repetition of same thought is technically called sajatiya prathyaya pravahah or the flow of similar thought with each thought dealing with the same object. This is called dhyanam. As a result of this attempt, which involves effort, which involves initiative, which involves deliberation, if a person follows naturally, after sometime, the mind gets into the groove of a similar thinking, by sheer habit, which you can also experience if you have attended akhanda nama bhajana.

In akhanda nama bhajan same name is repeated without a break. In this process the mind gets into a groove and thought gets deeply registered in subconscious mind. So, even after akhanda nama bhajan, that thought, such as Hare Rama or Om Namashivaya, keeps playing in our mind.

It is like an advertisement that keeps playing in our mind. The mind has a capacity to form Vasanas or impressions.

Samskara means vasanas and by the strength of that vasana that particular thought continues. It is like for pedaling the cycle for sometime, and thereafter you do not cycle, but because of the momentum of the initial effort, the cycle continues to run for sometime. The same thing happens to the thought cycle also; once that vritti continues, my willpower is not required; and any vritti which takes place without our effort is called sukshma vritti; any vritti that occurs in our mind, without deliberate effort is called sukshma vritti, the om namasivayah mantra which goes on in your head

throughout the day, is a sukshma vritti. Sukshma vritti means subtle thoughts. When the subtle thought is taking place in your mind you are not even aware of

it since your mind's focus is not on it. This is called absorption in a particular thought and in this state of absorption the subject object division is not felt.

It is exactly as in deep sleep state. In sleep state, the subject-object division is not felt; but still there is a thought modification taking place in sleep. It is not a deliberately entertained thought; but it happens in the sleep. How do you know that such a thought took place in sleep? Because, after waking up, we say I slept well.

To have that experience, we should have gone through a thought modification and that thought modification is called sukshma vritti. It is this sukshma vritti, subtle thought, which registers the experience in the dormant mind which we activate

in waking state.

(Note: See explanation of Vrithi given below as a postscript.)

After some time by sheer momentum the thought continues and that thought is called

sukshma vrrtti. In Sukshma Vrrti the subject-object division is not manifest. The subject-object division exists but it is not manifest at that time. This state of the sukshma vrrtti continuation, this state of the subtle thought continuation, is called absorption or Samadhi. Since the division is not manifest in that state it is called nirvikalpaka samadhi. Nirvikalpa samadhi is a state of division-less-ness. What division are we talking about? It is about the subject-object-instrument division. When we say that it is a state of division-less-ness one, we do not mean the divisions are absent; rather it means divisions are in un-manifest form.

An Acharya has given the example of water in which salt is dissolved. I, myself, have added the salt to the water. However, since it has become one with the water, **visibly** the salt is not there, although you know salt is there. In the same way, in absorption, thoughts are there but the thoughts are like the dissolved salt. They are there and they are capable of doing their functions, but they are not dominantly experienced. Such a state is called Nirvikalpaka samadhi. And Sri Krishna wants to talk about dharana, dhyana and samadhi in the verses Shloka's 18 and 19 respectively.

Shloka # 18:

यदा यदा ह्यसंयतामनसो ज्ञानं प्राप्नुयते योगिनः

तदा तदा ह्यसंयतामनसो ज्ञानं प्राप्नुयते योगिनः 6.18

When the well-controlled mind abides solely in the Self, rid of cravings for objects of desires, one is said to be integrated in Yoga.

In the shloka Vinīyatam chittam means withdrawing mind from object. It means thoughts are not entertained. Thus, if my mind is in the office, it means Officeakara Vṛithi is maintained. So one has to withdraw mind from office. Here mind withdraws from Anatma or objective universe. **Now, Anatma has three parts. They are: Whole world, Body and Mind.** So do not entertain thoughts related to these three. This is called Chittam Vinīyatam. This is possible only by forming detachment from Anatma. So, if you are attached to a person, that thought keeps coming up. **Our Ragaha and Dveshaha dominate our thoughts. Meditation, however, requires detachment.**

When the mind is rid of anatma akara vṛtti then the mind becomes free. When the mind is pre-occupied with the objective world, how can that mind be available for atma dhyanam? Therefore, withdraw the mind from the world then the mind abides in atma or the mind dwells in atma.

Atma being all pervading, the mind also rests in it. Mind cannot go out of Atma. If so, what does it mean when we say mind dwelling in Atma? It only means that you have thoughts related to that object, Atma.

If my mind dwells on Badrinath, it means I have thoughts related to Badrinath; therefore if the mind has to abide in atma it means the mind should entertain the thought modification's of one's associated with atma. Vedantic meditation is not thoughtlessness. Yoga does have thoughtless meditation. This, however, is not approved by the Vedas. They feel thoughtless meditation is of no use. We give importance to thought centered on Atma. The " I am Consciousness" principle by which the mind, body and thought are known also knows the thoughtless state of mind. This awareness is the witness (sakshi) of thoughtful and thoughtless mind.

The " I am" thought arises in consciousness. This thought, however, cannot disturb consciousness.

It is like my hand moving in the light; but the hand does not disturb the light; the light illumines the hand. Similarly "I" the consciousness illumines the thought, witnesses the thought, but the thoughts themselves do not disturb me; this is called asangatvam. So aham asangh; is one form of thought; aham sakshi is another form of thought; and these thoughts arrive and depart, but "I" never arrive and depart. It is exactly like the people entering a hall, the light illumines the hall; all the people vacate the hall, the empty hall is also illumined by the light; people come and go; hall gets filled up and

vacated; but the light illumines the full hall, as well as vacated hall. Our mind is like the hall; the thoughts are like the people, and consciousness is like the light, however, "I" never come nor go.

While I have been talking ,you have been listening and even as you listen, your mind should have entertained relevant thoughts about Atma or Anatma. All the thoughts that you have been entertaining are dealing with Atma and this is called akhanda akara vrtti. Akhanda akara vrtti means any thought pattern connected with the consciousness or sakshi.

And entertaining this thought pattern, is called atmani avasthanam or it means dwelling in atma or abiding in atma. It is not thoughtlessness. I can have thoughts like aham ekahah; aham asangh; aham rupa rahitah; **I am formless, I illumine the formed body, but myself am formless, like the light illumines the formed hand, but the light itself is formless,** thus aham arupah, aham sakshi, aham asangh, aham nityah; aham

shuddhah; All these are called atma dhyanam.

And entertaining this thought pattern is called atmani avasthanam.

Therefore, Sri Krishna says, the mind abides in atma, entertaining the relevant thoughts and this state is called

yogah or samadhih or state of absorption.

And as I said in the last class, samadhi itself is divided into two types. When effort is involved it is called Savikalpa Samadhi. It is a state where ego is dominant and individual effort is pronounced. Once this effort is maintained for some time and then it becomes an effortless process, like pedaling the cycle for some time then cycle moves on its own momentum. This is the state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. It is a state of absorption.

And what is this state of mind like? An example is given in the next shloka.

Shloka # 19:

यथा वायुः शून्ये स्थितः प्रविशति प्रविशति
तथा योगिनो मनो नियन्त्रितं तदा योगिनो मनो नियन्त्रितं॥६.१९॥

As light in a windless spot stirs not, this is the simile of the Yogin whose mind is controlled and who applies himself to Yoga.

Suppose a lamp is lighted. When kept in an open place, the flame flickers due to breeze. The direction depends on the breeze. In meditation, thought is like a flame. When I think of an object, within moments some other thought comes up without any awareness. This is the flickering mind. Now, when the mind is protected, like the lamp in an enclosure, the flame remains steady. This steady flame is an example of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. My Atmakara Vrithi is not disturbed.

So, what can enclose the mind? What can protect it?

Mind is subtle and it requires Vairagya and Bhakti as its enclosures. What is Bhakti and Vairagya? I will just give a clue. Details of these two topics I will discuss later. Sri Krishna discusses this in shloka 6.35 as well.

All our worries are because we cannot face the future. There

are two types of future, the actual future and the imaginary future. The imaginary future threatens more than the actual. Questions come up like what will happen if I fall sick etc. Thus, the worry of future is a cause of disturbance. Only solution here is to surrender the future to God.

The second disturbance is due to attachment. If I do not worry about myself; I worry about my family members; what will happen to them; and how can I help them; etc. When such thought comes, you tell yourselves they will be better off, without me; they will be taken care of by God.

And what is that disciplined mind doing? It is practicing atma dhyanam. Yogam in shloka means dhyanam. So, the un-flickering flame is an example of the restrained mind. Such a mind that is engaged in atma dhyanam reaches a state called samadhi.

So far Dhyana swaroopam was discussed. Shlokas # 20-23 are the culmination of Dhyanam. It is all about Nirvikalpa Samadhi. This is the consequence of ashtanga yoga. Nirvikapla Samadhi can be in any field. It is our natural faculty. We had this faculty in full measure when we were babies. Babies when they see an ant or cockroach they want to catch them with single-minded attention. You cannot distract a baby. It is a faculty we have lost in the name of growing up and now further eroded with our worries.

An absorbing book, a thrilling one-day cricket match all have moments of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. There is no mysticism in it. We use this faculty in Vedanta to direct our mind to Atma. Seven definitions of Nirvikalpa Samadhi are given now.

Take away:

Atma: I am formless, I illumine the formed body, but myself am formless, like the light illumines the formed hand, but the light itself is formless.

Anatma: Anatma has three parts. They are: Whole world, Body

and Mind.

How to keep mind steady in meditation? The mind is subtle and it requires Vairagyam and Bhakti to keep it steady.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy

P.S: Explanation of Vriithi from the internet:

Between the two compartments of thinking and perceiving of mind, though it is easy to stop the thinking part, it is verily hard nut to crack so far as the perceiving mind is concerned. According to the Advaitic theory of perception it is the consciousness within us which makes perception possible by uniting the consciousness in the object. The Vedantic theory of perception is that the mind comes out through the eye and assumes the shape of the object outside. A ray of the mind actually goes out assumes the shape and form of the object and envelops the object. Mental image coupled with the external something is the object, for whatever objects we see outside have got their own images in the mind. When we pass through a mango garden, a ray of the mind comes out through the eye and envelops the mango. When it assumes the shape of mango, the ray is termed as impression or Vritti. The enveloping process is called Vritti Vyapti. The veil that envelops mango is removed by the mental ray. As there is chaitanya associated with the vritti which illuminates the object 'Mango', this is called Phala vyapti.

When this vritti chaitanya illumines the object, then only does perception of mango take place. At this point, mind comes to function and does sankalpa – vikalpa by asking as to whether this is mango or not? Budhi (intellect) comes as a prop and determines from previous experience that this is mango. Chitta then makes enquiry "how can I get the mango?", "may I ask the gardener?" Ego asserts: "I must get the mango anyhow, as I want it." Then senses of actions are

commanded by mind for execution. When we see a mango tree it is external to us as far as our body is concerned, for we know the existence of the tree through the mind only so also our body is as much external to us as the yonder mango tree for it is also a mental percept. They are mere appearances that float in the one absolute Reality. Now as the tree is external to body and body is also external to us, the idea of externality of this universe is blown up. There is internality with reference to externality and when externality goes away where does internality arise? They are mere illusions and creations of mind. There is only the solid existence ,The real infinite ' I' That is our own self.Om Tat Sat.

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 20

Greetings All,

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 1 through 4:

Summarizing last class Swamiji said Anuvakaha 11 summarizes the dharma shastras covering topics of values, ethics, puja and developing a proper attitude. Our teachings are scriptures oriented, not person oriented. In person oriented it tends to become a cult while in scripture oriented it becomes a tradition. Until I understand scriptures, the Guru is important, but once I have access to the scriptures, the Guru is supposed to recede to the background. Our scriptures and traditions don't allow creation of a cult. The Vedic Acharya says, I have taught you now on give more validity to scriptures. At all times scriptures alone rule and nothing else does.

Whenever you have great people available make use of their presence to learn. Make them talk more to learn from them.

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 5:

Gifts should be given with faith; they should never be given without faith; they should be given in plenty; with modesty and with sympathy. Let there also be agreement in opinion (or friendly feelings) when gifts are offered.

Our scriptures talk of numerous disciplines and sadhanas. They have also condensed them for us into three basic sadhanas as well. **The three fundamental sadhanas are:**

- 1. Yagya**
- 2. Dana**
- 3. Tapaha**

These are three fundamental religious disciplines. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and the Gita's Chapter # 18, both mention these sadhanas.

Yagya: It is leading a life style of worship or leading a prayerful life. From the moment one gets up in the morning until one goes to sleep every activity performed is converted into worship.

Tapaha: Moderation in everything is important. Golden means has to be adopted. Don't let any activity get out of hand. You must be able to say "no" to anything, at any time. Moderation is just one meaning of Tapaha.

Danam: It is sharing with others. Make your life one of taking as well as giving. When both are practiced, only then the cycle of universe continues. There should not be any stagnation. Thus, the water cycle is: Ocean>cloud>river>ocean. Everything in life is cyclic. If we refuse this, then stagnation occurs and it affects negatively. In health as well energy taken in must equal energy put out else health problems occur. Superficially Danam appears like a loss. Scriptures, however, say whatever you give alone comes back. Hatred comes back. Love comes back. So, give good and things

in plenty. Danam is highlighted in this shloka. Panch Maha Yagya also requires charity.

How to perform Danam?

1) Give with Shradha or with faith. Nothing given is a loss. It always comes back to me. I may lose materially but I gain spiritually. It comes through inner growth or through Chitta shudhi. This faith must be strong.

2) Ashradhaya Adeyam: Do not give without faith. When you give without faith you tend to see only the loss. Don't give with heartburns. Even if you don't have faith, give. Faithless giving is better than not giving at all. One hopes this giving will lead to faithful giving.

3) Shriya Deyam: Give in abundance. Depending upon your capacity give proportionately.

4) Hriya Deyam: Don't look down upon the receiver. Arrogantly given danam becomes Rajas and or Tamas Danam. Gita, in chapter 17 discusses this topic. During giving, have the feeling that you have the good fortune to be able to help others.

5) Bhiya Danam: Give with concern to the receiver. Whatever you give must help others. One must have empathy. Identify with problem of receiver and give.

Here another shastric meaning comes in. Danam is considered a compulsory duty by shastras. You have to share with others without expecting anything back. It can even be kind words or even service to others. Live like the trees. They give more than they receive. That is why everybody wants trees. However, nobody wants more humans around as they only take. Giving is not a kama karma; it is considered a nitya karma, like giving tax. If you don't do your Vedic duties you can get Pratyavaya Papam. So to fulfill your daily karmas, give.

Samvida Deyam: Giving must be performed with understanding of

Desha (place), Kala (time) and Patram (recipient must be a deserving person). You need not give to persons without right credentials. One can find appropriate institutions and give through them as well.

Keep in mind that Danam is not money alone, it includes seva, kindness etc. as well.

Shlokas # 6, 7 and 8:

Shloka # 6:

Now, if there should arise any doubt regarding your acts or any uncertainty in respect of your conduct in life, you should act in those matters exactly as those Brahmanas who are present there, who are thoughtful, religious (experienced), not set on by others, not cruel (i.e. gentle) and are devoted to dharma.

Previously we saw scriptures are the primary source of dharma and adharma (do's and don't's). But Vedas do not discuss all possible situations in life. They are already very voluminous. So, Vedas do provide guidelines for us. We should be able to interpret them according to scriptures and according to situations. Therefore interpretation is important. With time, society and life styles change and they have to be taken into consideration. Vedas are very flexible in this regard. Citing an example Swamiji says Vedas are like the constitution of a country that can be applied to many situations that a country faces.

To interpret the Vedas, it must be performed in the right spirit as well. So, who will interpret the scriptures? Interpreters require a fine intellect to perform this task. Interpreters should have qualifications. Suppose one has a doubt about a religious practice or ritual, how to address this? This is called Vrata chikitsa. Vratam means conduct.

Vedas say, go to those people who are Guna Brahmanas. They

must be able to interpret. The rules of interpretation are documented in Mimasa shastra. Once an interpretation is done, the verdict must be accepted. One who does not accept such a verdict is called a Nastika.

The qualifications of a Samarshinaha (independent interpreter) are:

- Yukta: One who lives a life of Daharma.
- Ayukta: One who is impartial and independent person. He must not benefit from verdict.
- Aluksha: One who is considerate and empathic. He must benefit society.
- Dharma and Kama: He must not be interested in money, wealth etc.

Therefore, a Brahmin was supposed to lead a life of poverty totally immersed in scriptures. Such a life of voluntary poverty meant such a person was not afraid of anything.

Such people alone should interpret. And, if their verdict for some reason compromises with Shastras, one has to accept it. Citing story of Shankaracharya, once while he was travelling with his disciples he was offered alcohol to drink. He drank it. His disciples were disdainful of his action. Soon after, he came across a black smith who was melting metal. Shankara drank some of the molten metal as well astonishing his disciples. His message to his disciples was, I could do all this as nothing affects me. Until you can reach this stage you still have to follow scriptures.

When mahatmas violate dharma, we should keep in mind that they also follow dharma most of the time at a very high level.

Take Away:

1. Yagya, Dana and Tapaha are the three sadhanas that are considered the essence of Vedic religion.
2. While giving or making a Danam one must keep following

- in mind:
3. Do it with shradha;
 4. Give generously;
 5. Do not look down upon the person receiving the danam.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Taitreya Upanishad Class 19

Greetings All,

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 1:

Having taught the Vedas the preceptor enjoins the pupils, “Speak the truth, do your duty, never swerve from study of the Vedas, do not cut off the line of descendants in your family, after giving the preceptor the fee he desires. Never err from truth, never fall from duty, never overlook your own welfare, never neglect your prosperity and never neglect the study and the propagation of the Vedas.”

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 2:

Never swerve from your duties towards gods and towards the departed “souls’ (manes). May the mother be, to thee, a god. May the father be, to thee, a god. May the preceptor be to

thee, a god. May the guest be, to thee, a god.

Swamiji said Anuvakaha 11, Chapter # 1, presents the core of dharma shastra's. This knowledge is supposed to be learned by everybody and certainly followed by a Brahmachari. Dharma includes:

- Performing puja to God or performing Karma's.
- Developing proper values and ethics or Daivika Sampathi
- Developing proper attitude or Bhavana

All three are important. Some rituals are mentioned as well such as Daivika Karmani and Pitr Karmani

The Upanishad also talks about Satyam Vada. It also discusses some attitudes we need to develop, the topic we are now discussing.

One has to look upon one's Mother, Father, Teacher and the Guest, each of them respectively, as God. Mother and father both may have defects. Despite that one should look upon them as God. Acharya can also have defects but one should look upon him as God. Acharya here includes teachers of material sciences (physics, chemistry...) and arts (dance, music.) as well.

Atithi is to be looked upon as God. In Vedic times this value was a very important one. The visit of a guest was looked upon as will of God. As per Vedas, Atithi is one who comes as an unknown visitor on an unplanned visit. Unfortunately, we cannot follow this value anymore as many Swami's and Con artists are now coming in as Atithi's. Moreover, nowadays, hotels are available as are restaurants, as well as modern tools of quick communication. Even the average family today is a small one usually living in small quarters. So, this value has become one of academic interest only. They say Shiva and Vishnu also lived with their in-laws for long periods enjoying hospitality. Even with in-laws the longer your stay, the level of hospitality decreases.

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 3:

Let only actions that are free from blemishes be done, and not others. You must follow only those virtuous actions that are irreproachable, and not others.

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 4:

You must not breathe a word when those, who are more distinguished than you, are in discussion on spiritual matters (or, you must offer a seat to superiors and worship them with acts of reverence and love).

Continuing Anuvakaha 11, chapter 1, here, the teacher gives an important advice. There are three sources of knowledge for dharma and adharma or establishing the Do's and Don'ts in life. They are:

- **Vedas:** also known as Sruthi Grantham, is the primary source of dharma. Especially the Vedapoorva Bhaga.
- **Smrithi's:** Rishi's and Acharyas wrote secondary scriptures, also known as Smrithi Grantham. Smrithi's are based upon Vedic teachings. Thus, words are of Acharya but content is of Vedas. Smrithi elaborates the teachings of Sruthi through stories. Values are hidden in the story like butter in milk. We have to churn and extract the butter. Acharyas churned and brought the butter up. They all bring Dharma Gyanam.
- **Lifestyle of people who lived according to the Sruthis.** These are people have conquered Raga and Dvesha. Their life is an open book of shastric living also called Shista Achara. They follow shastras in life. Their life is visible to us or it may even come to us in the form of a biography.

Suppose Smrithi has a statement or a Shishta does something, contradicting the Sruthi's; whose direction should I follow? How to handle such contradictions? Citing an example of this contradiction, Durvasa was a great Rishi but he was angry all

the time, while Shashtra's say one has to maintain a balanced mind.

The answer is Shruti alone dominates, not the Shista or the Smrithi. So, in all such cases of contradiction, follow the Vedas. Shastras believe, in general, that no human being is 100% perfect. Even Rishi's can have doshas. Even Avatara's can have Doshas. There is only one perfect being and that is God. Even god, when he comes down as a human being, he shows human weaknesses. So, the teacher says, follow the Shashtra Vidhi, at all times.

Why Mahatmas perform contradictory actions, one does not know. Do not challenge them? Do not judge them. Learn from their right actions and don't take up their wrong actions. Thus, Parashurama cut his mother's head while Ekalavya cut his thumb as a dakshina for his Guru. In such cases do not judge or criticize them. Sometimes the situation requires compromises, like Sri Krishna's actions in Mahabharata. No value is absolute; they are all situational. If so, why can't I compromise, is a question that can rise? Shastras say you can also do so but only after mastering Values and Ethics. Once you conquer Raga and Dvesha you can consider compromising on values. Rishi's and Mahatma's have transcended Raga and Dvesha, hence they can perform contradictory actions.

Vedas say such a person can contradict Vedas and even create their own Dharma.

Birla gave a blank check book to Mahatma Gandhi. However, after quiet some time he noted that Gandhiji had used only one Rupee. So, you give freedom to one who is mature and responsible. So too, it is with Mahatma's. Once you reach this maturity you can also perform actions contradictory to shastra's.

Follow your Guru, but be aware that if the Guru performs actions contradicting the shastras, don't follow him, follow

the shastra's. Thus, it is said of Sri Krishna, don't go by what he did rather go by what he said.

Don't take adharmic actions. Do not criticize mahatmas.

Great people also had weaknesses. Filter the weaknesses. Look at positives and imbibe them. Mimamsa is filtering positives and pulling it out. Citing several examples: Prashurama, in cutting his mother's head, was following his father's instructions. Ekalavya was willing to give anything as Gurudashina. He displayed Guru bhakti. Rama sent Sita to the forest. The lesson was, a king was supposed to have the pulse of the people in mind or a Prajaranjaka Raja. Pandavas sharing of one wife, here the mother's instructions were followed. Prahalada violated father's instructions but he was glorified. Here Pitravakyam was not in sync with the shastra's.

Vedic tradition is not person centered. Thus, Vedas are not prophet centered like Christianity and Islam. Buddha was an Avatara but Buddhism contradicted the Vedas, hence he could not succeed in India.

Until you know the shatras, the Guru has to teach you; after that Guru has to withdraw. After that, shastras alone prevail.

Patanjali, a Rishi, gave us the Yoga system. Yoga's philosophy, however, was not in sync with Vedas. So, his philosophy was not accepted. Yoga itself was accepted.

Gyana Vaiseshika was accepted but its philosophy was not accepted, as it was not in sync with Vedas.

Anywhere Shastras are contradicted, do not accept it. This is the teaching of the Guru. Even Shankaracharya's writings were analyzed for such contradictions.

Shloka # 4:

Keep an open mind. Suppose some Brahmanas (Not by birth, rather people who have studied Vedas) were to come, who are

superior to us in age, experience, and knowledge, welcome them and use it as an opportunity to learn. Experience is a big teacher. An uneducated man with experience knows a lot more than an educated one without experience. When they, come ask them to take a seat. Once seated don't talk about your self. Use their visit to learn more. Mahatmas generally don't like to talk. So, don't talk about your self. Ask them questions and make them talk. Thus, learn more and more.

Take Away:

2. Follow the teachings of Shashtra's at all times. Any contradictions to Shastras, anywhere, do not follow them.
3. Do not criticize mahatmas.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bhagawat Gita, Class 88: Chapter 6, Verses 18 & 19

Greetings All,

Continuing his teaching of the Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, in the first 17 shlokas Sri Krishna dealt with Bahiranga and Antharanga sadhanani. Bahiranga sadhanani are general disciplines to be followed throughout life while Antharanga sadhanani are specific disciplines to be followed just before

performing meditation. Both sadhanas contribute to meditation.

Now in the following verses, Sri Krishna talks about dhyana svarupam and phalam. Dhyana svarupam means actual process of meditation and dhyana phalam, is the culmination of the meditation process. Here, Sri Krishna is following Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali. Patanjali is a great rishi, who has presented a beautiful system for the practice of meditation and for the integration of the personality, which is called yoga shastram. Yoga shastra has two parts. They are: 1) Practice of meditation and 2) Philosophy of meditation.

The philosophy part of meditation is not accepted by Vedic teachings. They consider it against Vedic teachings. Even though the philosophy is rejected, the practical aspects of meditation are accepted. The practice of meditation is heavily borrowed in puranas and Vyasa also brings it in Gita's chapter # 6.

Since it is heavily borrowed and useful, I will briefly talk about the yoga system of meditation and this system is popularly known as ashtanga yoga or meditation in eight steps. Anga means limb or step or stages; and this is a wonderful system for integrating the whole personality, because it takes care of our physical personality, annamaya kosha, it takes care of our pranamaya kosha, the energy personality and it takes care of the mental, the manomaya kosha, and it also takes care of vijnanamaya kosha. It is a wonderful integrating system.

The Ashtanga Yoga talks about Yama and Niyama. They address our way of life or the Bahiranga Sadhanani. Our lifestyle's determines our mental makeup; if you are a highly reacting type of person, our mind is generally restless and therefore when we sit for mediation, we cannot calm down. And, therefore, Patanjali also accepts that we have to tone and discipline our general lifestyles using a process called yama and niyama; yama emphasizes the things to be avoided in our

day-to-day life to enjoy a calm mind. It determines our mental make up.

Yama: They are things one should avoid in life. They are the Do not's of life.

Niyama: These are things that are to be followed in life or the Do's.

Swamiji says, he calls them the ten commandments of Hinduism, the five do's and five don'ts.

The Yamas, Don'ts, are:

1. Give up violence. This is the practice of nonviolence both at the mental and physical level. When we are violent the environment gets disturbed. **The world is only an image. When you smile, the world smiles. The world is a mirror. If I do violence, I will get it back at some time in future.**
2. **Satyam:** Give up speaking of untruth, both in thought and speech.
3. **Asteyam:** Non-stealing: Do not possess anything that is not yours. An unfair deal is a stolen one, whether you recognize it or not. Nonpayment is stealing. Any benefit occurring via unfair means is stealing.
4. **Brahmacharya:** Give up inappropriate attitude towards opposite sex. Both male and female should give up inappropriate relationships.
5. **Aparigraha:** Non-possessiveness. Possessing too much is not right. Even legitimately earned wealth should not be owned beyond a certain measure. Practice non-possession.

Niyamas or Do's:

6. **Saucha:** It is purity within and without. Physical cleanliness and inner mental purity.
7. **Santosha:** is contentment with whatever I have, earn etc. Don't compare with others.

8. **Svadhyaya**: Study of scriptures.
9. **Tapaha**: Austerity. Simple living. Non-luxurious life. Ascetic living.
10. **Ishwara Pranidhanam**: Surrender to God. Surrender to the God means surrendering to the laws of karma. God means the laws of karma. These laws keep the Universe in harmony; it allows functioning of the universe according to the universal physical and moral law and order, which is God's.

Whatever we experience in life is what we legitimately deserve. Every experience that I go through, right from the happiest moment, up to the most torturing situation happens according to the moral order of the God and surrendering to the God is accepting the law of karma.

What do you mean by acceptance? I do not resist any experience. I do not criticize any experience; I do not criticize God for my experience; I accept whatever I receive as the will of God. We can try to improve the future; because future has not yet come; but whatever has already come is God's will; that acceptance of Ishwara's will is Ishwara Pranidhanam.

The last three Niyamas (Tapas, Svadhyaya and Ishwara pranidhanam) are also known as Kriya Yoga or Karma Yoga.

Following the Ten Commandments make me a moral, ethical, decent and cultured person. They are all Bahiranga Sadhanani.

Coming back to ashtanga yoga shastra, the next steps prescribed by Patanjali are:

5. **Asana**: Sitting in a posture for a long time. One must be able to sit for at least 20 minutes at a stretch. Asanas deal with annamaya kosha.
6. **Pranayama**: It deals with regulation of breath. It is like a bird captured in a cage, the breath captures the mind inside and holds it.

7. Prathyahara: Withdrawal of sense organs from external world. Prathyahara of Yoga shastra is same as Damaha of Vedanta. Sri Krishna also spoke about this in the last few shlokas.

Asana, Pranayama and Parthyahara are all antharanga sadhanani. They are disciplines to be followed just before meditation.

What is the nature of meditation? It consists of three stages; dharana, dhyana and samadhi, put together are called the dhyana svarupam or also known as atma samyamaha, a name given by Patanjali. Sri Krishna is talking about these three stages.

Dharana: means turning mind away from world and fixing mind on object of meditation. It is like the focusing of the camera before taking a picture. Object of meditation varies depending upon the level of the student. In Yoga shastra they also talk of various chakras as well. All Chakras are related to God. **Exercise in concentration is not meditation. Only focusing upon god is meditation.** Even removal of thought is not recommended. There has to be mental activity for it to be meditation.

Dhyanam: Retaining the mind on the focused object is dhyanam. Thus, dharana is focus while dhyanam is retaining the focus. When I try retaining, the mind tends to slip away and you need to bring it back. This tug of war is known as dhyanam.

Samadhi: is natural absorption in object of meditation. It is end of the tug of war. It is a state of constant flow of similar thoughts. Every thought should be associated with God. It is acceptable to only see the eyes or the nose or the mouth of God. It is still God. All thoughts should be converted to God.

Sajatiya pratyaya pravahah means thinking of similar thoughts, to the exclusion of dissimilar thoughts. Dissimilar thoughts are thoughts when we see god as well as other things. The state of Samadhi is like a continuous flow of ghee in unbroken

stream.

The central aim of all three, Dharana, Dhyanam and Samadhi is to dwell the mind on God.

Suppose one has to go beyond Saguna Ishwara, for such a person, his meditation should be on “Aham Brahma Asmi” or it should be related to Atma Swaroopa meditation. This is called Vedantic meditation.

In the first meditation on Saguna Ishwara, God is outside as an object while in second meditation, on Nirguna Ishwara, God is non-different from me. Even though the object of meditation differs, the method is same.

If one follows all eight steps, where does it culminate?

It culminates in Samadhi. This is the eighth step. I still see me meditating on God. I see myself as a meditator and I see God as the object of meditation. This means there is effort involved. This also means there is a division between subject and object. This is Savikalpa Samadhi, the eighth step.

From Savikalpa now one moves to Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Just as you get absorbed in watching a movie, you forget that you are in a theater at that time. “I” as an entity am forgotten. I have become one with the movie. How do I know it? My reactions to the movie tell us that the subject-object division has been temporarily resolved. **This absorption where I forget the surroundings, or self-forgetfulness, is called Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Thought is there, meditator is there, but I am absorbed; this is Nirvikalpa Samadhi.** This is the phalam of the eight steps or destination.

It should be noted again that Savikalpa Samadhi is the eighth step while Nirvikalpa Samadhi is the destination or culmination of the eight steps. Nirvikapla is not identified as a ninth step as it is the final destination.

Here Sri Krishna is not talking about meditation on personal God; Krishna is talking about atma dhyanam or meditation on my own nature, which means I entertain only those thoughts, which reveal my nature. These are evident in the shloka “Chiddananda Roopam Shivoham, Shivoham.”

Sri Krishna cites example of a steady flame which, when protected, is not disturbed by the wind. Similarly in dhyanam, my mind continuously thinks I am asangaha; I am free from bondage; I am free from problems; all these things; this is the essence, which comes from shloka #18 onwards up to shloka #19; Shlokas 18 and 19 deal with dharana, dhyana, samadhi.

Take away:

1. Ahimsa: The world is only an image. When you smile, the world smiles. The world is a mirror. If I do violence, I will get it back at some time in future.
2. Exercise in concentration is not meditation. Only focusing upon god is meditation.
3. Try practicing the ten commandments of Hinduism in daily life.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy

Bhagawat Gita, Class 87:

Chapter 6, Verses 14 to 17

Greetings All,

Continuing his teaching of the Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, Sri Krishna is now dealing with antaranga sadhanani including preparations before meditation. We see him mention the role of the place (desha), time (kala), asanam, posture of body (sharira sthiti), indriyanigraha (withdrawal of sense organs from external world, especially the eyes should be partially or fully closed) and Prana samyam (dealing with prana and apana discussed in fifth chapter). We have thus seen these six stages and now we are coming to Manonigraha.

Shloka # 14:

आत्मनि चित्तं स्थितं भयं त्यक्त्वा चैव
व्रतं कथं च मनो ध्यायेत् ॥ ६.१४ ॥

With the inner sense tranquillized, fear gone, established in vow of chastity, controlling the mind, thoughts anchored in Me, the integrated Yogin should sit, intent on Me.

What should be the condition of the mind during meditation? Mind is disturbed by two sources.

First of all past experiences can come up during meditation. The subconscious mind throws up past experiences such as regrets of the past. Sri Krishna says one should not allow the past to control you. One has to control the past. Surrender all experiences such as insults, pain etc., at Lord's feet. Say, " O God, you have given me all these experiences only for my inner growth. I do not have anger or hatred towards anyone. I surrender everything at your divine feet." Past is good, if we can learn from it, however, it can be a burden if it causes inferiority complex, hatred etc. Then, the past is a bad experience. **Remember, in hatred it is the hater who is suffering and not the hated. Hatred is an obstacle to the**

hating person; hatred is never an obstacle to the hated person. The hated may not even be aware of the hate. So, forgive everyone.

Call up all people you don't like in your mind and forgive them.

Every pain we go through is for polishing us. Then, I enjoy a prashanta atma, an atma relieved of a ton of regrets.

The second disturbance of the mind is worry about the future. Surrender future to God. "Whatever the future is, it is due to my own karmas. I cannot escape the future. Rather, I welcome my future." The future here includes family and friends. After all, I cannot determine the future of my children. I also pray to god that, " God, give me the strength to face and learn from experiences". It requires a peculiar mind to learn from adversity. Like the Hamsa bird that separates milk from water. Like, when we eat the sugar cane, we take in the juice and leave the fiber behind. Similarly, from every experience I should take the essence; that is learning and forget the experience itself. With such an attitude, welcome the future. This will result in a relaxed mind. **Thinking of future brings anxiety to the mind.**

The word Vigata, means both past and future are given up. In this state the present is fully available to me for my use in meditation. Normally the present is not available to me because it is affected by past and future. Now, when I have taken care of the past and future, the present time is available for meditation.

Brahmacharya means student of scriptures. Brahma means scriptures and Chari means leading a way of life. Scriptures prescribe several disciplines to a Brahmachari to get maximum benefit from his studies and it is called Brahmacharyam. One of the disciplines imposed by the scriptures says a brahmachari should have only three relationships. They are

with:

- 1) God;
- 2) Guru; and
- 3) Shatstram.

He should not have any other relationships.

That is the reason that during initiation into Sanyasa they remove the tuft signifying all these three relationships are also broken. When the Sanyasi discovers advaitam there is no more relationships. All relations require at least two people or Dvaitam. In a Brahmachari there is no worldly relationship. It is the same in a Sanyasi as well.

At least at the time of meditation, I should cut all the relationship. Tell yourselves, I am not a father now; I am not a mother; I am not a husband; I am not a wife; I am not a son; I am not a daughter; I am not a son-in-law, and a daughter. Whatever the relationship especially the disturbing relationship, cut them all off and **temporarily at least become a mental sanyasi.**

And that is why Sri Krishna said at the end of the 5th chapter, temporarily renouncing all the worldly relationships become a mental sanyasi.

Kailvalya Upanishad says “ Even a Grihastha should not have any relationship during meditation.” This is known as Brahmacharya Vrattam. It is a temporary mental state of Sanyasa during meditation.

Invoke relationship with God and fix the mind on God. This is the only relationship that continues in every life one takes. In our temporary relationships we lose sight of this one permanent relationship with God. It is like the river that is related to the ocean. So, also it is with God and me. So, with an integrated mind may you sit in meditation.

And what is the goal of the meditation; matparaha; **keep Me** not only as an object of meditation; but also as the destination of the life; therefore mumukṣu (seeker) may you practice meditation.

Shloka # 15:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ 6.15 ॥

Thus applying himself unintermittently, with a disciplined mind, the Yogin wins peace, which is abidance in Me, and whose climax is emancipation.

How long does one practice meditation? Sri Krishna says it should be practiced consistently, regularly and for a long time. In the shloka Atma means the mind, Yunjan means meditator and Evam means dwelling upon God. When we say fixing the mind on God, what type of God is meant here? Now Scriptures present God in three different ways depending upon the level of the Student as mandah, madhyama, and uttama; Mandah: (Mild) at the mandah level, first stage, God is a personal God, with a particular form like Rama rupam, Krishna rupam, Devi rupam and it is called eka rupam dhyanam. This also signifies Dvaita. Madhyam: (Medium): when a person is advanced, then the very same Lord becomes vishva rupah; aneka rupa, which means I see the lord as the very creation itself. So for a madhyama adhikari it is aneka rupa dhyanam. This also signifies dvaita. Uttama: (Ideal): A person who is still more advanced and one who has studied the Upanishads or Vedanta for him is prescribed arupa dhyanam; transcending both one form and many forms, we come to the formless Ishvara; and when one comes to formless God; the meditator meditated division disappears; the dvaitam gets converted to advaitam. Bheda upasanam or dhyanam gets transformed into abheda dhyanam. In eka rupa dhyanam bheda is there; in aneka rupa dhyanam also there is bheda. However, in arupa dhyanam this division is not there anymore. So, according to our level, the way we

perceive God also differs. This arupa dhyanam signifies Advaita. So meditation can vary depending upon approach taken. Sri Krishna is clearly talking about Arupa dhyanam. So meditate on Me. Perform the meditation without distractions. The more you meditate the greater is your inner peace. This peace comes from God. Peace from set up can be up set. Peace dependent on relationships such as job, family etc., can change. The peace from God cannot change.

Katho Upanishad says, only they get permanent peace, others don't. Real peace comes from within Me alone. This peace results in Jivan Mukti and then finally culminates in Videha mukti or freedom from Punar janma or freedom from rebirth.

Shloka # 16:

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He has no Yoga who eats too much or who eats not at all; who habitually sleeps too much or who keeps always awake, O Arjuna!

With the previous shloka Sri Krishna has completed antaranga sadhanani, for now. Budhi nischaya is also discussed later.

In shlokas # 16 and 17 respectively, Bahiranga sadhanani was discussed. Here, again, Sri Krishna brings up Bahiranga sadhanani. The ideas for Bahiranga sadhanani are not presented in an organized manner in this chapter.

Bahiranga sadhanani are general disciplines to be followed before meditation. Here the concept of moderation is emphasized. Sri Krishna says do not get addicted to anything. It is important for a seeker to follow the golden mean. Moderation with respect to eating, activity, sleep etc., is now discussed.

One who overeats cannot succeed in meditation. Overeating is

considered a papam. The Aghamarshana suktam is supposed to be chanted at time of bathing to wash away all impurities. Agha means papam and Marshana means washing.

People tend to snack in between meals. It is bad. Don't over eat. What is over eating? Stomach should only be half full after eating. A quarter should be for water and or liquids such as buttermilk. The last quarter should be empty to provide room for air. How to know if you are half full? When you feel you can eat some more, stop it. After eating you should not feel any discomfort.

Don't fast too much either. Such a person also cannot meditate. Our system cannot handle it. Once in a while fasting is acceptable. Even with fasting one is supposed to eat palaharam (tamil), which means Phalaharam or eating fruits.

Sleeping too much is also bad for meditation. One who does not sleep is also not good for meditation. These requirements will vary with age and constitution.

Shloka # 17:

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One who in proper measure eats and plays, applies himself to works, sleeps and keeps awake, achieves Yoga that destroys all pains.

Moderation in eating, resting, and entertainment is recommended for a meditator. It should be like having pickle with curd rice. We should know when to stop. Moderation should also be practiced in activity. A workaholic is also not a good meditator. He needs to spend time with family as well.

In an age where everybody is trying for corporate success Shastras are not always followed. Sri Krishna is reminding us of our life goals. So, meditation comes to one who practices

moderation in life. So, moderation is very important.

Take away:

To succeed in meditation:

2. Get over your past regrets. In your mind, invoke all people you don't like and forgive them.
3. Don't dwell on your or families' future as it can bring anxieties. They are not conducive for meditation. Place the future in God's hands.
4. At least at the time of meditation, I should cut all the relationship. At least during meditation become a mental sanyasi.
5. Practice moderation in eating, sleeping and work.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy