

AUM AMRITESHVARYAI NAMAH

Swami Kaivalyananda's Talks on the Bhagavad Gita, Shankara Bhashya, Class 40

Remembering the Guru Parampara, we begin our discussions on the Bhagavad Gita, Sankara Bhashya, Chapter 2, 68th shloka.

**Tasmāt yasya mahābaho nigr̥hītāni sarvaśaḥ
Indriyāṇīndriyārthebhyas tasya prajñā pratiṣṭatā. 2.68.**

Now we can look at the preface to the shloka by Shaṅkara. It says, 'Yatato hyapi' ityupanyastasya arthasya anekadhā upapati uktvā taṁ cha arthaṁ upapādyā upasaṁharati.'

The shlokas beginning from verse 60, 'yatato hyapi kaunteya,' until now have been speaking primarily about control of the senses. This subject, 'anekadhā upapati uktvā.' Sri Kṛṣṇa has given the logic, or upapati, behind why this control of the senses is needed, in several ways. Then, 'taṁ cha arthaṁ,' this same meaning, 'upapādyā upasaṁharati,' is being proved and concluded in this shloka. This is through describing the indications of a Man-of Steady-Wisdom, the Sthita Prajnan.

Then Shaṅkara commentates on the shloka. It says, 'Indriyāṇāṁ pravṛttau doṣaḥ upapāditaḥ' This says that in the functioning of the indriyas, the senses, there is a defect. 'Tasmāt,' therefore, if the indriyas are allowed to function freely without control, it will create a defect. Because of that, 'yasya yateḥ he mahābāho!' So, 'yasya,' 'of whom', 'yateḥ,' 'of the striving Yogi.' Here we are discussing about the Yati, the Yogi.

For the Yati, 'nigr̥hītāni sarvaśaḥ sarvaprakāraiḥ mānasādibhedaiḥ indriyāṇi indriyārthebhyas tasya prajñā pratiṣṭitā.'

'For the Yati, whose every indriya is controlled, from every object, his Wisdom is Steady. This is 'sarvaśaḥ sarvaprakāraiḥ,' This control refers to the objects, the senses, and the mind. Thus, 'manasādibhedaiḥ,' by the mind, senses, etc., 'indriyāṇi indriyārthebhyas.' This means that the Yati control his indriyas from wandering into the sense-objects. These are the objects of sound, sight, taste, smell, and touch.

When the sense-objects are referred to in the scriptures, it usually says, ‘**śabdādi,**’ ‘sound, etc.’ This is because the primary objects of the organs of knowledge are sound, sight, smell, taste, and touch. However, it also says, ‘**mānasādibedhaiḥ.**’ This means that these are not the only objects experienced. There are also objects experienced by the mind. These are objects imagined by the mind. Thus, the objects experienced are not just the sense-objects such as sound.

When the scriptures refer to the 5 senses-objects, it usually says, ‘**śabdādi,**’ ‘sound, etc.’ By this, all of the other sense-objects are also indicated. Therefore, the message is that one must control the senses from every form of sense-object. It says, ‘**Nigrhītāṇi,**’ being controlled. ‘Nigraham,’ control, means to make fully grasped, under perfect control. This is something that must be practiced by a Yati, a Yogi striving for Realization.

Now what is the most important and first thing that must be done by a Yati to control the senses? The first thing is that when in a situation where the sense-objects are being grasped, the objects should be grasped with discrimination between dharma and adharma. We said in the bhashya before, ‘**avarjanīyeshu vishayeshu,**’ in the experiences of objects that must be experienced.’ These means to only grasp the sense-objects that must be grasped. That is primary. This means that a Yati cannot not act with the mind or senses in sense-objects that are prohibited. That is the first lesson.

Everything else comes after this. That is according to the dharma of the ashramas, or life-stages. There is an ashrama dharma for the Yati. By the ashramas, we don’t mean an ashram, but the 4 stages of life; brahmacharyam, gārhashtham, vanaprastha, and sanyassa. The dharma of the Yati is that of sanyassa. For the Yati, there are rules according to that life-stage that must be followed. Therefore, the first thing is to fully accept those rules.

This is what Shaṅkara said before, ‘**avarjanīyeshu vishayeshu.**’ This means that there will be some things that simply cannot be avoided. The Yati will have to act, through the mind, senses, and body. Therefore, the first thing is to avoid what can be avoided. That is the first step of control of the indriyas.

This is the external part. A Yati cannot act in the same way as a householder. This control of the indriyas is needed for both the gṛhastha and the Yati. However, both people perform actions in two different realms. For the Yati, the first thing that

must be accepted is the dharma of his life-stage, the dharma of sanyassa. The classification of these four stages, or āśramas, was given by the ṛshis in order to enable man to attain this control of the indriyas.

The Yati will know, 'what should be avoided? What cannot be avoided?' However, that is only the first step. After that, the Yati should strive to control the senses internally, acting only in unavoidable matters. How did a sadhak accept Sanyassa in those days? This is different from today. In those days, the sanyassi would retire to the forest, or a cave. In today's society, this is not possible. Instead, today, a Yati must remain in the midst of society.

Even when the Yati of today remains in the midst of society, this **indriya nigraham**, sense-control, is necessary. In that circumstance, one must primarily use one's discrimination as the means for this. However, the appeasement of the senses, without using discrimination, has never been allowed to a Yati. Therefore, even while the Yati experiences objects in unavoidable circumstances, he cannot fall prey to attachment (**mamata**).

Even there, in the midst of society, one must control the indriyas in order to avoid this attachment. This is what is called control of the senses through discrimination. Thus, the first thing for the Yati to do is to avoid prohibited objects, which are not unavoidable, through all sense-organs. These are the organs of action, (feet, hands, tongue, organs of procreation and excretion), through the organs of knowledge (ears, eyes, tongue, nose, skin), as well as through the mind.

To avoid seeing something that shouldn't be seen, one closes the eyes. That is not a practical method of sense-control. There will be some objects that should be seen and others that shouldn't be seen. However, it isn't possible for the Yati to always open and close the eyes like this. Control of the senses is not possible simply by closing one's eyes. Even then, the sense-object will be experienced through the mind.

At the same time, the Yati should physically avoid the objects of temptation. Actually, this is what he must do. If the Yati is placed before the objects, he should not let allow himself to be tested. This should not happen to the Yati. This is because it is the dharma of the Yati to not fall prey to attachment and the feeling of 'mine.' That must be given utmost attention.

Then how can that be avoided? When we speak about experiences that cannot be avoided, if we look at a Yati today, in the middle of society, there are things he cannot avoid, such as money. All of that comes of itself to the Yati. This comes along with the social service performed by the Yati. All of these things which are part of the actions of the Yati may create attachment within. The control of senses discussed here is necessary in order to avoid this attachment (asakti).

Like this, one may become attached to karma. Karma is necessary, but in this case, a Yati can leave the path of Karma Yoga, and develop attachment to the karma. That is why karma is most dangerous. However, it isn't possible to avoid karma. Instead, it must be utilized properly. The Yoga of the Yati can be destroyed while performing karma at any time. Once this Yoga is destroyed, the action falls to the state of mere karma. This is where the Yati develops attachment.

Because of that, he destroys the path of Karma Yoga for himself, as well as his own Spiritual Path. Then how can control of the indriyas be possible for such a Yati, whose senses are constantly interacting with the external world? If this must be done, two factors must be favorable.

Most important is God's Grace (**Iśvarānugraham**). Only through this may it become possible. The other factor is **pūrva saṁskara**, the good impressions left from previous births. Only if both of these are favorable can such a Yati, situated in the midst of society, attain control of the indriyas. Or else, he will fall. He will have a downfall. The bad vasanas will take control and make him a slave.

No matter how much sadhana one performs or how much discrimination one has attained, if these two factors are absent, the sadhak will have a downfall. Then, what is the consolation after such a fall? 'It's no problem that I fell. It's enough if others don't know about it.' The sadhak will have to be consoled like this. That is what normally happens.

So, an important factor needed to prevent this from happening is saṁskara, mental impressions left from our good actions in this life and our previous lives. We explained before how some don't strive to gain this saṁskara. They say that God's Grace alone is enough. Because of this, we fail to strive to attain this factor, of good saṁskaras.

However, this attitude is not enough. The saṁskara gained through one's good actions is needed in the spiritual path. This saṁskara is attained through putting

forth effort. That is a primary factor. The other factors are what aid in this. When Sage Vashishta gave spiritual instruction to the boy Sri Rāma, he says this also, that pūrva samskara is a must for a sadhak.

The word 'Yati,' meaning a Yogi, comes from the verb, 'yatati,' to strive. Therefore, the Yati is one who puts forth effort. How? A person situated in the midst of objects cannot hide from them. It is said that the Jiva becomes bound through the experiences of the sense-objects; sound, sight, taste, smell, and touch. These may bind the mind of the Yati. These make the Yati attached to karma.

Therefore, the Yati should conquer this attachment with Viveka, discrimination. This viveka is in different ways. In which way does Viveka help? This viveka helps a person in the midst of objects to become separated from them. This is said in the Gita to be most important. The first type of this separation from the sense-objects is **īśvara bhāvana**, the feeling of identification with the Lord. This is said in the Gita to be of utmost importance.

Even though it is not specifically said that this is for control of the senses, wherever there is the description of **īśvara bhāvana**, the identification with the Lord, it is for this control of the senses. These descriptions in the scriptures are to enable the sadhak to achieve this sense-control. This principle of **Īśvara** can be in several ways; as **Saguna**, with attributes, or **Nirguna**, without attributes. All of these descriptions are for making possible this control of the senses.

How? This is because the individual constantly experiences external objects. Therefore, the scriptures indicate this principle of the Lord, **Īśvara tattva**. That is not the experience of the Jiva. Even if the Jiva experiences the Lord, it is in the form of an object. He doesn't experience the Lord as He really is. He experiences this **Īśvara Tattva** in the form of sound, sight, taste, smell, and touch. He doesn't experience the Lord as the true **Īśvara Tattva**.

The scriptures constantly describe the **Īśvara Tattva**, the principle of the Lord. The Jiva's experience is not this, however. What does a person accept through sadhana? A sadhak aims to constantly remember the true nature of the Lord, even while in the midst of the experiences of sound, sight, etc. This is what the scriptures help to do. This is in two ways. The true nature of the Lord described in the scriptures is of two kinds. This is aimed at giving awareness of the Lord to the Jivas, even while in the midst of worldly experiences.

For the first, we can know that the nature of the sense-objects is to create attraction towards them, through the mind and senses of the Jiva. Thus, when the mind and senses are attracted to the sense-object, the Jiva also becomes attracted. What is the primary base of this attraction? The basis of this is the false understanding in the mind that these sense-objects are real. This is the feeling, 'this is real.'

So, when the Yati moves in the field of action, he experiences that the actions are real. These 5 sense-objects themselves are karma. Karma and the sense-objects are one and the same. It is not that the objects of the senses and karma are different. These sense-objects themselves are karma for the Jiva. Thus, the Jiva feels that these sense-objects are real, satyam.

What do the scriptures say? The scriptures say, 'These are not real.' That is the meaning of the phrase, '**brahman satya jagan mithya.**' This means that these objects are not the Truth. The mind and senses run after these objects because of the feeling, 'these are real.' Thus, the scriptures say to the Jiva, 'this field of action, and the objects of the senses are not real.' The scriptures teach this to the mind. Because of this, this principle must be grasped. In that way, the attraction in the mind towards the objects will lessen.

While performing karma with this attitude, this attraction will decrease. When the attraction decreases, the attachment towards the karma will lessen. Then the Jiva becomes able to be in midst of the sense-objects, devoid of attachment. He will be able to perform in the field of action in this way.

Therefore, the way attachment is formed is through the feeling that the sense-objects are real. The scriptures exclaim that these objects such as sound are unreal, in order to avoid this attachment. This is one path, accepted by the scriptures. Because the sadhak holds onto the conviction that the sense-objects are unreal, he can avoid attachment while in the midst of the objects. These are the experiences which are unavoidable that are referred to (**avarjanīya**). Because the Jiva doesn't have the freedom to avoid these, he must act with the mind and senses in such circumstances. Here, two things occur.

So, through indicating that the objects of the senses are unreal, the sadhak can lessen the attraction towards these objects in the mind. The scriptures indicate this principle, the Jiva grasps it, and eventually gains firmness in its application.

According to the development of that firmness, the sadhak will be able to live amidst the sense objects, free of attachment.

What is the other path instructed by the scriptures? This is not through the indication that the objects are imaginary. Instead, it is through indicating that they are satyam, true. That is the second path. 'These objects of the senses, such as sound, as well as the field of karma, are both true. Because the Paramātman has Himself become everything, there can really be no differentiation between true and untrue. If everything is One in the Truth, then everything that is seen is That alone. That same Consciousness is what we experience through name and form.'

This path is to see everything as the Supreme Consciousness, the Paramātman. It isn't possible to separate things as real and unreal, in the Truth. The person who sees a pot, really sees only mud. A person who sees an ornament really sees only gold. The scriptures also aim at awakening this awareness and cultivating the mind towards this view. '**Sarva Khalvidam Brahma.**' 'All of this is indeed the Absolute Consciousness.' This is what was just described.

What we described before is the process of '**neti, neti,**' 'not this, not this.' Thus, the second path of the scriptures is to see everything as the embodiment of the Lord. The scriptures indicate this to cultivate the mind in that direction. When all objects are seen as the embodiment of God, the mind won't feel particular attraction towards the objects. Then even if the mind is attracted, it isn't harmful. This is because whatever is seen is the Lord. If the mind becomes attracted to an object from seeing the Lord in everything, there is no harm.

In this path, the mind doesn't run after objects by seeing them as objects. Instead, the mind follows after the objects, by seeing them as the embodiment of the Lord. Then, there is no particular necessity to control this attraction. Instead, it is the mental bhava, or attitude which must be developed. These objects such as sound will continue to be experienced, but as the embodiment of God. Nothing else will be seen. The scriptures say this path also for controlling the indriyas. This is a primary path for controlling the mind.

If the objects are seen as objects, the mind should be trained to see the objects as unreal. If not, then don't see the object as an object. See it as the Paramatman Himself. These are the paths instructed by the Shrutis. When is this? This is for

when the mind is involved in the external world. These two paths are for the Yati situated amidst these sense objects. These are two mental practices, two mental sadhanas for when the mind is faced with the sense-objects. If you simply close your eyes in front objects, it won't make them go away. The attachment of the mind towards the objects will not leave.

The mind cannot become isolated from sense-objects. Even if you close your eyes, sense-objects will enter the mind. The aid of the eyes is not needed for the sense-objects to enter the mind. The mind itself is sufficient for that, to bring the sense-objects to the Jiva. Thus, the first path is to train the mind, 'these are not Real.' Otherwise, one should train the mind, 'these are the Paramatman Himself.' These are the methods by which a Yati trains his mind to deal with the sense-objects without attachment.

Ultimately, what happens? Instead of the feeling of the sense-object in the mind, the Yati experiences the awareness of the Lord within the mind. This *Iśvara Bhava*, the identification with the Lord, causes the attraction towards the objects to decrease. A person who has the awareness that these objects are the embodiment of the Lord Himself cannot see a sense-object as a sense-object. Nor will such a Yati experience the desire for the object caused by the dwelling of the mind on objects.

We said before in the previous shloka, '**Dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ saṅgas teṣvupajāyate.**' 'Through thinking of sense-objects comes attachment to them.' For this Yati, the attachment caused by thinking of sense-objects, along with the desire that springs from this, are avoided. This is one path. Remember, I said there are two paths. These are the two bhavas, or attitudes, that are used when one comes in contact with the sense-objects.

These are the paths that are instructed in the Gita. This is said in the Gita. '**Vāsudevaḥ sarvaṁ iti saḥ mahatma sudurlabhaḥ.**' This is the attitude to see everything as *Vāsudeva*, the Supreme Lord. However, the shloka says that such a one is '**durlabha**,' very rare. It's not enough to say it; a person must actually see the objects in this way. This ability to see the world as the embodiment of the Lord is needed. It's not enough to tell others that you see. The indication of that seeing is needed. What is that? That is that the mind doesn't become drawn towards the objects. The mind must not become subservient to desire. That is the proof.

There are other paths spoken of for controlling the indriyas. When the normal Jiva performs action, it is with body-awareness, the feeling 'I am the body.' A person thinks, 'I am acting.' With this attitude, one performs action. This is when one's awareness is constricted to the physical body (sharīra bodha). From this, one performs actions with the feeling, 'I am acting.' Here, the Gita gives instructions, to renounce this body-consciousness and perform actions. That is instructed as a primary sadhana.

For a person engaged in action, the senses continuously experience the sense-objects. In this, the sadhak must gain the firm determination, 'in the Truth, I have no connection with these senses or their object. In my true nature, my Self, these objects do not exist.' This bhava, or feeling should become firm. Then it becomes a strong determination, or dharana. The Gita says, '**indriyānīndriyārtheṣu vartante iti dhārayan.**' The Perfect Sage has the determination, 'the senses act among their objects, but the Self is unaffected.' This bhava must be made firm. It also says, '**guṇa guṇeṣu vartante.**' The qualities act within themselves.' This attitude should be made firm.

We said earlier about the practices used when one is confronted by the sense objects. Here in the Gita, it is speaking about a practice for abiding in the Atman. Even when the Yati performs actions and grasps the sense objects such as sound, his mind is within himself. Here, within himself means the small 'self,' the identification with the body, like other Jivas. An ordinary person cannot help but think of himself as the body. Only through the identification with the body can we speak or remember things.

The Yati tries to change that attitude by adopting a different attitude. For encouraging such an attitude, Sri Krishna gave the instruction to Arjuna about the Self, such as, 'the Self is neither born nor dies.' Instead of thinking that one is born and will die, the sadhak should think that he is unborn and eternal, free from birth and death. '**Ajo nityam śāśvatoyam achaloyam sanātanaḥ.**' The sadhak should grasp his own Self through these words. 'Birthless, Eternal, Everlasting, Motionless, Ancient.'

The mind then abides in the Self (**ātma niṣṭā**). Thus, there is no point in merely saying to grasp oneself. Instead, one should grasp oneself in the way that is opposite to the material view of oneself. At present, we grasp ourselves in a

materialistic manner. That is why we feel, 'I am born, and will die.' Therefore, the sadhak should grasp himself in the opposite way. 'I am not these. I am not these. Instead, I am Eternal.' In this way, the sadhak says, 'not this, not this,' (**neti, neti**) to everything external. However the internal attitude is, '**sarvam khalvidam brahma.**' 'All of this is the Supreme Consciousness.' This is an internal attitude.

That is the difference between the two bhavas. In one, the person grasps the truth about what he sees. In the other, he thinks about the One who sees. What is seen can either be felt as unreal, or as the embodiment of the Lord. However, the seer, the experiencer, is Truth. The Seer is never destroyed. That is not the body, mind, or intellect. The Atman is not just a word. Through the word 'Atman,' we won't be able to grasp anything in particular. The word 'Atman' doesn't have the power to reveal the Atman.

That which comes into our mind through the word 'Atman' is not the knowledge of an external object. This word 'Atman', when grasped, reveals that which we don't know. Therefore, the Atman is not grasped through the word. What is left after that word is left behind? Through words such as 'Truth, Bliss, and Knowledge, we are trying to indicate the highest Truth. Therefore, while abiding in the Self, through the contemplation of what is indicated by these phrases, one should perform karma. This means to perform action while trying to know one's Self. One performs actions, while refuting all the external knowledge one has held about oneself.

This is what is called **Atma Niṣṭa Chinta**, contemplation of the Self. This is in two ways. Though there are two ways, in both, one strives to maintain the remembrance of God. However, there are even people who cannot perform either of these kinds of contemplation. These two are what are mostly spoken of in the Gita. Still, there are those who are unable to do either of these.

These people come to the realm of action, remaining there, and are unable to sustain this bhava of the true nature of the Self. They lack the one-pointedness of mind to think in that way, as well the firmness and patience of mind required for this. For such people, there is a third path spoken of in the Gita. Such people need not contemplate the sense-objects as being unreal, nor see the objects as the Lord. They need not see the Lord within them, nor refute any of their external

identifications. For them, it is enough if they develop a feeling towards the Lord, in whatever way they conceive of Him.

So, without any of the mental practices, how can a person see the Lord within? It can be in any form or attitude. Such people should imagine the Lord in that form and attitude and perform action. This path is for ordinary human beings. This isn't for a Yati, a Yogi striving for Liberation. Instead, it is for ordinary people. These ordinary people worship the Lord with flowers, leaves, water, etc. This worship is performed by seeing the Lord as someone separate. That is all they can do.

This is not harmful. Instead, it is encouraged. Even in scriptures where the supreme reality of the Atman is explained, this instruction is also given. Whatever faith a person has at a certain time must not be destroyed. This doesn't matter how base or undeveloped it is. That faith must not be destroyed, and he should be led forward. So don't destroy that faith and show a new one. That is a mistake. '**Ajnasya alpa prabuddhasya sarvam brahmeti opateh.**' This means that one must not jump in front of society and exclaim, 'everything is Brahman!'

'**Maha nila jateshca satena viniyojita.**' This was said by Sage Vashisha to Sri Rama. That would be similar to throwing that person to hell. The person saying this should understand what the Truth is. Only then can he give instructions according to the maturity of the listener. Or else, both will fall. If a person who doesn't have his balance tries to lift up someone who has fallen, both will end up on the ground. Therefore, without disturbing the intellect of one who is capable only of this base worship of the Lord, one should help him to progress forward. One shouldn't reprimand him. That is another matter.

Such a person must be led forwards, step by step. This is the sankalpa behind all of the forms of worship instructed by our Acharyas. For him, that is the means to control of the senses, this basic devotion (**gauna bhakti**). The imagination of the Lord in his mind creates mental purity. This sankalpa destroys all of his desires. No matter how basic that concept of God is, it isn't harmful. For him, it is most holy. Therefore, it is not true that a person can be saved only through Advaita, or that everyone should be taught to follow Advaita. The aspirants suitable for Advaita are rare. The Lord says, '**sudurlabha.**' Such a Yogi is extremely rare. There will be more suitable aspirants for the Vedic path of action and worship.

Therefore, Advaita must accept Dvaita, duality. Advaita never opposes Dvaita. We have said this before. It is only possible to reach Advaita through Dvaita. Advaita depends on Dvaita, and Dvaita depends on Advaita, in the level of sadhana. Both are things that depend on each other. The discussing and practice of both are in Dvaita, duality. They are not in Advaita.

‘**Chodyam vā parihāram vā kriyatam dvaita bhāṣayā.**’ All of our questions and solutions are in duality, Dvaita. Therefore, the subject of sense control must be instructed according to the individual’s maturity and level. We have discussed this subject, of control of the indriyas. Several people have had misconceptions about this. Several people have asked, ‘how is control of the indriyas possible while living in society?’

When we talk about controlling the senses while amidst society, it is the same as saying, ‘avoid dying while being alive.’ This is meaningless. ‘Live while keeping your head with you.’ Do you say this to anyone?’ No. That is what is meant by control of the senses. The Yati gives attention to sense-control in the same way. Even if we are saying a great philosophy, we should pay attention to the most important thing; ‘save yourself.’ That is why this control of the senses is needed.

That is why we are discussing this subject seriously. This is speaking about the state of the Man-of-Steady-Wisdom, not an ignorant person. No matter who it is, whether a Jnani or ignorant person, this control of the senses is important. Everyone must accept the first lessons of this. The advanced lessons are what we are discussing for the level of the Tattvajnani. Wherever it is, discrimination is needed. The basic foundation for the control of the senses is the discrimination between dharma and adharma.

In the advanced stages of this sense-control, it is discrimination between the Self and non-Self that aids the sadhak. The ultimate and complete control of the senses is fulfilled through discrimination between the Self and non-Self. This can happen also through devotion to the Lord, **Iśvara Bhakti**. In truth, devotion to Iśvara is for controlling the senses. There is no gain on the part of the Lord through our devotion. What can the Lord gain? The Lord does not gain anything through our devotion.

A person thinks that his devotion is for the Lord. However, there is no particular benefit for Iśvara from this. But how does this help the person? Through

single and one-pointed devotion, one is able to gain control over the senses. Some people call themselves devotees, but lack this sense control. They enact the role of a devotee, but lack discrimination. Some bhaktas are like that. They say, 'I am a bhakta. Therefore, I don't need discrimination.' Viveka, discrimination means knowledge. Thus, they say, 'knowledge is not for a devotee. Discrimination is not for a bhakta.'

However, such people have a different attitude about bhakti. That is what is called bhakti devoid of discrimination. They say that this is true bhakti. 'Discrimination is an obstacle to bhakti.' This is what they think. However, this is not bhakti. They feel that bhakti is to make the mind 'loose.' This is to let go of the mind. There are people who say that this is bhakti. In this way, they don't gain discrimination. Their discrimination is thus lost.

This is not what is said here. Bhakti as a spiritual practice is along with viveka, discrimination. There is no bhakti devoid of viveka. There is no bhakti devoid of Jnana, knowledge. There is also no Jnana without bhakti. In the beginning and end, in truth, both of these are one. They are not two. Wherever there is viveka, there will be bhakti. Wherever there is bhakti, there will be viveka. Therefore, it is not right to say that these two are different paths of sadhana. They are one.

In the beginning and the end, these are one. We can understand this if we think simply. How can a person without awareness of Ísvara have devotion towards Him? How can a person worship the Lord without a sankalpa of Him? The sankalpa of the Lord in the mind is formed from the basic discrimination of the mind. This sankalpa may be undeveloped sometimes, but there is still discrimination there. If one rejects discrimination, then bhakti and worship cannot exist.

The basis of worship is discrimination. A person without viveka cannot develop bhakti. Without really gaining bhakti, a person may act as if he has bhakti. This is shown in someone who tries to refute the existence of discrimination in bhakti. Therefore, these two things develop gradually together. Wherever viveka develops, there bhakti will also be developed. Wherever bhakti grows, viveka will also grow. These are not two. These are two attitudes of the same thing.

So even basic devotion is for the control of the senses. Without these, there are also other ways of controlling the senses. There are certain practices in Yoga and other things that aid in controlling the senses. There are people who try to overcome

the senses through intense mental practices, restraining the fluctuations of mind. That is also accepted to an extent. It is not refuted. There are certain kinds of austerities described for controlling the senses, such as **kṛccham**, and **chandrāyanam**. These are where one severely restricts the intake of food according to the lunar path. These are all for the control of the senses. These austerities are a strain on the body.

The scriptures also accept these, to a certain degree. It is said that if one is a great sinner, one can perform tapas for the destruction of the sin. According to the intensity of the sin, one performs tapas of the same intensity. That is why the Dharma Shastras and other scriptures prescribe atonements for sin. It says to perform tapas in the presence of 5 fires. This is called panchagni. These are all given as atonements for wrong actions. Why? This is because papa, sin, can be severe.

These austerities are said for people whose consciences are thickly clouded with vice. However, this is also for the control of the senses. In whatever way it may be, the indicating of the Atman, and the indicating of sadhana, are all through the control of the senses. Here, what is instructed to the Yati, the striving Yogi? It says to attain sense control through discriminating between the Self and non-Self. This is said by Shankara in several parts of the commentary. It is also said by Shankara in the commentaries of the Upanishads where sense control is discussed.

So a Yati must gain control of the senses through discrimination. When we live in society amidst the sense objects, there is no other path than this. This is to hold firmly onto discrimination, without allowing it to be destroyed. Aside from satsang, there is no other way to sustain this viveka. One should establish the mind in satsang. The word 'satsanga,' means the meeting, 'sanga,' with Truth, 'sat.' This isn't a 'sanga' to any kind of individual. Rather, it is the attachment to the ultimate Truth. This is to keep the mind continuously in the connection with the Truth.

Thus, making firm this discrimination, one should withdraw from the attractions of external objects, and become Liberated. That is what is called, '**mukti**.' Mukti is the freedom of the mind from the longings of external objects. This is the freedom of mind of a Jivanmuktan. On the path of sadhana, a fall may happen. That is natural. However, the sadhak will feel remorse for the mistake. 'I can't believe that happened. That was a mistake.' Then the mind will desire to prevent that from happening again. It may happen again, but the mind has the desire to prevent it.

Then the mind experiences remorse for the action. However, what is the level of the Man-of-Steady-Wisdom? The mind of the Man-of-Steady-Wisdom is one that doesn't experience remorse. This means that it is a mind that doesn't commit a wrong. The mind of the Sthita Prajnan doesn't commit mistakes and then feel remorse. Even if a normal person commits a mistake and atones for it, the remorse for the act will still exist in the mind. He won't be able to forget the mistake. The remembrance of the past may enter the mind at any moment. He will think, 'how could I do that?' Even if it isn't a pleasant memory, he will think, 'how could I make that mistake?'

However, the Man-of-Steady-Wisdom is not like that. There is no remorse in the mind of the Sthita Prajnan, nor is there the remembrance of mistakes committed. Mistakes simply don't occur. That is the mind of the Sthita Prajnan. That is what is said, '**sarvaśaḥ**,' in all ways, from all objects, his mind is in freedom, **vimukti**. The agitation caused by memories of past mistakes doesn't enter the mind of the Sthita Prajnan, knowingly or unknowingly. That is what is called 'mukti.' This is the freedom of the mind.

We cannot say 'the mukti of the Atman.' Liberation is for the mind. There is no need of Mukti for the Atman, because it is Free by Its own nature. However, the mind must attain Mukti. All of sadhana is for the Liberation of the mind. Don't think that it is for the Mukti of the Atman. The scriptures say that the Self is nityamuktan, eternally free. There is also Mukti for Prajna, awareness. The Liberation of prajna is needed. This to prevent the prajna from experiencing, 'I can't believe I did that mistake.' Where that doesn't occur is what is called the Steadiness of Wisdom (Prajna stairyam). Thus, it says here in the bhashya, '**sarvaśaḥ sarvaprakāraiḥ**,' 'from all sense objects, to free the mind.' This is make the mind liberated from all sense objects.

We said in a previous shloka, '**Aśāntasya kutaḥ sukham?**' Where can there happiness for one who has no peace?' In the state of Sthita Prajna, the mind is peaceful. The mind experiences peace, free from any kind of guilty conscience. Only that mind experiences peace, and happiness, and Liberation. The Lord is instructing the signs of Man-of-Steady-Wisdom, in order that we may attain that mind through the use of these signs as a sadhana.

‘Tasya prajna pratiṣṭitā.’ This is what is meant to have Steadiness in Wisdom. In this, the mind doesn’t experience a guilty conscience. We may ask, ‘Then how can one forget the past? One isn’t born with Steady Wisdom, isn’t it? The scriptures say to obtain that state. Then that must mean that there was a time before it is attained. So, how does that affect the Man-of-Steady-Wisdom?’

As far as the Man-of-Steady-Wisdom is concerned, there is no past. Then we may ask, ‘what about the future? How will that affect him?’ To this, there is also no future for the Sthita Prajnan. Then we will naturally think that the Sthita Prajnan remains in the present. There is also no present for the Sthita Prajnan. That is Steadiness in Wisdom. The present moment is the most dangerous, because it is the conjoining place of the past and future. The present is in between these two places. The future is caused from the present, and the present is the result of the past. Therefore, there is not even that, the present moment.

In that state, the Wisdom of the Sage becomes Steady. This the primary means for that is said here, ‘control of the senses.’ For that, the primary means is viveka, discrimination. Thus, sense-control is attained through discrimination. That is the message of the Gita, and we should keep this in mind. Now we can look at the shloka.

‘Mahābāho.’ This is a name given to Arjuna in order to give him strength. ‘Great-armed.’ This is to awaken the masculine qualities within Arjuna. ‘You can do it if you try.’ This is what the Lord is trying to encourage in Arjuna through this name. **‘Tasmāt,’** because you must control the senses, **‘yasya,’** for whom, for which Yati, **‘sarvaśaḥ,’** from everywhere, **‘indriyārthebhyaḥ indriyāni nigṛhītāni,’** when the senses are completely controlled from the sense-objects, **‘tasya,’** for that Yati, **‘prajñā pratiṣṭitā,’** his Wisdom is Steady.

**‘Tasmāt yasya mahābāho nigṛhītāni sarvaśaḥ
Indriyānīndriyārthebhyo tasya prajñā pratiṣṭitā.’ 2.68.**

Now, look at what is next in the commentary. **‘yatatopi ityādi ślokabhyāṁ muktasya vartasya prakṛtaśokabhyāmapi kathamānitvāt asti punaruktity aśāṅkya pariharati.’**

Here, it is telling about the essence of this group of shlokas. This shows that the principle elucidated through the previous shlokas is concluded here.

**Yā niśā sarvabhūtānām tasyām jāgarti saṁyamī
Yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneḥ 2.69.**

The section starting here depicts the Man-of-Steady-Wisdom in another level. The preface to this shloka by Shaṅkara says, ‘**yo yaṁ laukiko vaidikas cha vyavahāraḥ saḥ utpana vivekajñānasya sthitaprajñasya avidyākāryatvāt avidyānivṛttau nivartate. Avidyāyāscha vidyāvirodhāt nivṛttiḥ ityetam arthaṁ sphuṭīkurvan āha.**’

So, here Shaṅkara says, ‘**Yo yaṁ laukiko vaidikascha vyavahāraḥ.**’ The word ‘**vyavahāra**’ means ‘action.’ There are two kinds of action; vaidic, of the Vedas, and laukika, worldly actions. The Vaidic actions refers to rites such as the sacrifice, etc. Worldly actions refers to farming, etc. These 2 kinds of action are performed by man, ‘**saḥ utpana vivekajñānasya sthitaprajñasya,**’ for the Man-of-Steady-Wisdom, who has gained knowledge and discrimination, ‘**avidyākāryatvāt avidyānivṛttau nivartate.**’ Because these actions exist from Avidya, Ignorance, such actions cease to exist in the Man-of-Steady-Wisdom, from the destruction of Avidya.

Karma withdraws from the Sthita Prajnan. Then it says, ‘**avidyāyāscha vidyāvirodhāt nivṛttiḥ.**’ So, because this Ignorance is opposed to the Vidya, the Self-knowledge of the Man-of-Steady-Wisdom, this Ignorance as well withdraws from Him. ‘**Ityetam arthaṁ sphuṭīkurvan āha,**’ making this meaning clear, the Lord, Sri Kṛṣṇa spoke this shloka, ‘**Yā niśā sarvabhūtānām.**’

So here it is saying that karmas drop way from the Man-of-Steady-Wisdom. These are all kinds of karma. When it says that ‘all karmas drop away,’ we will naturally have a doubt. This is, ‘doesn’t the Sthita Prajnan perform actions? That is what we see, isn’t it? Then what does the Lord mean? How can it say that all karmas drop away?’

The Lord Himself says this in the Gita. When it says that all karmas drop away, the Lord means, ‘**na me karmāṇi limpanti.**’ ‘I am not affected by karmas.’ What is important is not whether karmas remain or drop away externally. Instead,

the Lord says, 'these karmas do not bind me.' This is true Karma Tyaga. This is what the Gita indicates. While the Sage performs karmas, at the same time, the karmas drop away. For this, there is no difference between the performance of karma and renunciation of karma, externally.

The Gita says, '**Na dveṣṭī na kamkṣyati.**' The Sage neither has distaste for karma, nor does he feel urged towards it. This is speaking about the Man-of-Steady-Wisdom. In the 3rd chapter, karma will again be discussed. There, Shaṅkara speaks about the necessity of performing karma. It says that one must perform karma. One cannot avoid karma, because it is unavoidable by its very nature. That which cannot be avoided by itself cannot be avoided.

However, the Man-of-Steady-Wisdom has freedom. The Sthita Prajnan does not have to perform karma out of necessity. If the Sthita Prajnan has to, he can completely avoid karma externally. Shaṅkara has said this before. It doesn't matter whether the Sthita Prajnan performs karma or avoids it externally. This is not a matter that is decided externally. If he has to, the Sthita Prajnan can avoid karmas externally completely. Why? '**Avidyākāryatvāt.**' This is because karma is a product of Ignorance, Avidya.

'**Avidyā nivṛttau nivartate.**' Wherever Ignorance is destroyed, there karma has withdrawn. Then, the Sage is the same, whether external actions continue or not. Therefore, when the commentary speaks about the withdrawing of all karmas, we must not have a misconception about this. After the destruction of Avidya, there is nothing in particular that needs to be done to avoid karma. It drops away by itself. Even if the karma continues, it is already dropped away from the Sage. If it stops continuing, also, it has withdrawn.

We need to keep this in mind for this section. '**Avidyā nivṛttau nivartate.**' After Ignorance has ceased, karma withdraws.' Then, it says that Avidya is destroyed. '**Vidyāvirodhāt.**' This Ignorance is destroyed in the dawn of Knowledge. That is clear. '**Ityetam arthaṁ sphuṭikurvan āha.**'

So, no matter how much the signs of the Man-of-Perfect Wisdom are described, if we want to fully understand that state, we must ourselves become a Sthita Prajnan. We said before that it isn't possible to grasp the level of the Sthita Prajnan. Here in this shloka, it conveys this same principle. This is that the Jnani and Ajnani are like day and night.

Some people say, 'no matter how much I hear satsang, I can't become right. I can't become good. I agree with what is said, but I just can't realize the fruit.' The Lord speaks about this here. It isn't possible to gain Realization by standing where you are. It is only possible if you go forward. Therefore, it isn't impossible. A person says that they have strived very hard but haven't achieved the fruit. The Lord says that that won't happen by standing where you are. Why? Where does effort take place? It must be where one stands. If you just jump in the air, you won't go forward. You will land where you jumped from. That's what we normally do. Why? Because it is like day and night.

We are rowing, but the boat is tied to the shore. Therefore, it is meaningless to place the blame elsewhere. A person says, 'I listen, and strive, but cannot be saved.' There is no meaning in this. The person who says that he hears doesn't hear. He acts like he puts forth a lot of effort, but doesn't really do much. The person should understand what is said before acting. However, such a person doesn't understand what is said. He is ok as long as he watches the TV program of the Gita. As soon as it's over, he goes back to his previous state.

What is said must reach within. A person says, 'I sit with great alertness.' That's true. Because of the one-pointedness of the shraddha, he will go to sleep. When he tries to pay more attention, that will happen. Deep sleep has a good quality to it. Therefore, that is the best quality of the person. At that time, he won't be aware of anything that is happening.

The class will be for 90 minutes. The person will be awake for the first 10 minutes, and the last 10 minutes. What does this person think? He thinks the remaining time is grasped within him. He won't know what happened in the time after the first 10 minutes and before the last 10. 'I sat down for satsang, and stood up from satsang.' He won't know what happened in between.

The beginning of the class and the end will be OK. Then there's no meaning in saying, 'I heard the class. I will present myself as if I understood. I have knowledge.' But that's not needed here. This is because I have to come again here tomorrow. (laughs) That's why the Lord speaks about this. What does the Lord say? He says that this is like night and day. Whatever is known by a person with knowledge is night for someone who doesn't know. For the person without the knowledge, the knowledge is like nighttime. That is what the shloka says.

And what about the person with knowledge? It is never possible for him to go to the level of the one who is ignorant. To uplift the person who is ignorant, the person with knowledge can never adopt the level of ignorance. We say that we share knowledge, like pouring milk from container to container. However, this knowledge cannot be poured like this.

Instead, knowledge is born within oneself. In Truth, even the Lord is unable to help us in this. Knowledge must be born from within one's self. Some people say, 'let the Lord give us everything.' They say this about Knowledge, about sadhana. They don't think this about the matter of food, but will say this about important matters. They say, 'we are not the ones to attain these, we are not the ones to give. Amma must give. The Guru must give. God must give.'

Whatever we want, we don't want to let go. But for these big matters, we say, 'let God give us that.' We say, 'God, give me moksha.' Such people, at the same time, will go to any length to obtain petty desires. These small matters are necessary, but it is enough if the Lord simply gives us these big matters. This is because it is difficult for us. 'I can't strive. I want to be taken there. Anyways, this Moksha is not a thing that is bought and sold.' However, this kind of effort is fine for them with small matters. They will buy and sell food. Then why do they say, 'it's not possible?'

The Gita explains, '**yasyām jāgarti bhūtāni.**' 'That which is day for the world, is night for the one who is self-controlled. The Saṁyamī, one who is self-controlled, the Jnani, cannot make the Ajnani good by becoming an Ajnani. This says that that isn't possible, ever. There are two main points here.

First is that the Ajnani, one who is ignorant of the Self's true nature, can never understand the level of the Jnani. No matter how hard he may try, the Ajnani cannot grasp that state from the level of Ignorance. This is what is described by the shloka. The level of Knowledge, and the level of Ignorance are very distant.

When we started the section about the qualities of the Man-of-Steady-Wisdom, we said that the Sthita Prajnan, the Man-of-Steady-Wisdom cannot be measured. The level of the Sthita Prajnan can never be measured and understood from the level of the Ajnani. That isn't possible. It is because that State is like night for the Ajnani. Even after hearing of it, and practicing it, without direct experience, the state of the

Jnani is like night for the Ajnani. That is what the shloka says. We will discuss this further in the next class.

**Yā niśā sarvabhūtānām tasyām jāgati saṁyamī
Yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneḥ 2.69.**

AUM AMRITESHVARYAI NAMAH