

Introduction

Manah Sodhanam means Purification of Mind (manah=mind; sodhanam=purification)

Impurity of mind is the cause of Sorrow and Agitation. And this in turn reflects into those we come in contact with.

We give too much importance to our Body (food, comforts, physical appearance)

Too much importance is paid to our Intellect (secular knowledge, information).

We tend to neglect the Mind, the seat of Emotions. The only time we pay attention to the mind is when we are in a crisis situation.

We do not understand the cause of our problems, which is why there is so much depression and conflict.

Conflicts come from our own likes and dislikes, passions, hatred, racial discrimination, and other prejudices. War exists because of our intolerance to differences of skin color, religion, or different political ideology.

Sometimes we are patient and helpful towards others but fail to do so with our immediate family.

Power and Purity of Mind:

One may gain physical, financial, political, or intellectual power, but if misused for personal gain it becomes useless; it is not serving society. A vast amount of sorrow is created in society by the powerful, the rich, and the learned.

Freedom from Anger:

A truly happy person is one who can withstand and overcome the storm of Passion and Anger that rises in the mind. Knowledge alone is not enough. Until one understands the mind, our day-to-day problems will remain unanswered. Anger is impossible to remove unless its CAUSE is understood.

The Mind: Our Best Friend and Worst Enemy

Whether the Spiritual Seeker is following the path of Action, Devotion, Knowledge, Meditation, or Renunciation, the ONLY ABSTACLE holding him back is one's own Mind.

We are not the body or mind but rather the Infinite Self, Atman, of the nature of absolute Bliss.

One need not produce the blissful Self; it is already resident within. One need only drop his identification with the body and mind and recognize this fact. . . 'I am That'.

But the mind does not allow this to happen. As long as we do not UNDERSTAND our true nature, we continue to condemn the mind.

The mind is the cause of our Bondage and is also the means of our Liberation. One should not think of fighting or conquering the mind, for such ideas make the mind one's enemy.

What we really need to do is make the mind our friend, which it already is in reality; we just need to realize it.

All ideas of fighting, winning over, or conquering the mind are nothing but our ATTEMPTS to understand it. When we do understand it, all impurities vanish. This person will be successful in any field of life he chooses.

Every aspect of life demands attention; nothing happens automatically. If we do not pay attention to our physical health then we will suffer from physical problems. If one pays a lot of attention to the physical body and not the mind, one may be physically healthy but not necessarily mentally fit. Then also, it only follows that if we pay attention to any particular aspect of life, we gain success in that field.

Many believe that reading spiritual studies will purify our minds automatically. But knowledge alone will not purify the mind. Special attention must be paid to the process of purification, or else there will always be contradictions in our lives.

One must put their own EFFORT and Improve his/her character.

To Sum it up:

If we pay attention to our BODY, MIND, and INTELLECT equally, there will be a total and perfect integration of our personality.

For this integration to take place, we need to understand our own mind. Once we reach that, a great peace will come over us.

Once the mind is purified for the highest spiritual purpose of life, all other purposes are automatically taken care of.

Verse 1

**Even though the non-dual, blissful, Supreme Self dwells in the hearts of all beings,
It is not experienced by them, being veiled by ignorance and also by impurities of the mind**

The Supreme Self is unaffected or influences by time, space, object, or cause. Where all comparisons end and beyond is called “Parama”. It is that bliss which does not depend upon any object. All other happiness is dependent on some objects

Happiness cannot come from the outside. Even though the nature of the Supreme is happiness and that it is the Self of all beings, we do not see it or recognize it. We know that ‘we are’ but we do not know that we are the nature of Bliss, and we don’t need something outside ourselves for our happiness.

The Self is also veiled by impurities of the mind: likes-dislike, hatred, jealousy, lust passion, anger, greed, ego, selfishness, etc. These impurities keep us from recognizing that we are blissful by nature. But we keep searching for happiness outside ourselves.

Verse 2

However, when ignorance is dispelled by Knowledge, the Supreme Self shines by Itself.

Only knowledge of the Self dispels spiritual ignorance, and the Supreme Self shine itself through. Secular knowledge only removes our ignorance regarding other finite objects of the world.

When we learn through study and experience that there is no joy in worldly object, we still don’t give up on joy in worldly object. We look for justification, or say that maybe the next thing that comes along will give me joy. We get angry when criticized because we are attached to either the body or our thoughts. We fallback to old behavior patterns when challenging situations arise. Therefore we need to put this knowledge into practice.

Verse 3

As long as the impurities of the mind exist or are weakened, the desire for knowing the Truth does not arise in the human heart.

As long as strong worldly desires and attachments persist in a human heart, the desire for knowledge does not arise.

Verse 4

If desire for Truth does arise in an individual due to past karmas, or he begins to understand through listening, firm abidance (to dwell) in the Supreme Self does not happen.

Have you experienced the feeling that while you are in the company of a teacher you seemed to understand everything clearly? But when the session is over and you go back to your routine, that clarity of understanding fades away. That is because qualities such as Discrimination, Dispassion, Purity of Thought, etc. are predominant while we are listening to the teacher. When the teacher goes away, our abidance also becomes weak. In short, if we do not consciously work toward purity of the mind, then firm abidance in this knowledge does not take place.

It is true that the study of Vedanta will purify the mind, but unless we pay conscious attention the mind, its purification will not be fast enough and our abidance [*dwelling*] in the Self will come very slowly.

One cannot merely circumvent [*defeat with a plan*] the mind and proceed higher. We must understand the mind before we can go beyond it.

Verse 5

In the absence of this abidance, the seekers do not experience that Supreme Bless enjoyed by the yogi who is liberated, and the seeker's practice becomes fruitless.

The Vedanta says we are already free. . . even when we think we are bound, we are FREE.

It is only when we identify ourselves with a limited body that we feel we are bound. (We are not bound by God because God is none other than our own Self.)

We should experience the joy of being free even while living here in this world, in this very body, and it has to be permanent. But in order to experience the Bliss of liberation while here on earth, Purity of Mind is an absolute necessity.

Due to the lack of abidance, the uninterrupted Bliss of liberation is not experienced. We have to be open to the possibility of change. If we keep up the study, the possibility of greater understanding and progress exists.

It is a paradox that the self is ever present but is veiled by ignorance and impurities of the mind. When we study the scriptures we understand that the happiness we seek in life is not somewhere outside, but is our own true nature.

However we are still unable to abide (dwell) in that realization. Our problem is not a Lack of KNOWLEDGE, but a Lack of ADHERENCE to that knowledge. When we do not abide in this self-knowledge, our state becomes most uninviting. Though we are aware that our nature is pure bliss, we still suffer. When we are unaware of this fact and suffered, it was understandable, but when we know the Truth and are still sorrowful, it is much worse!

All our impurities of the mind are like that injunction (ruling; ban) which prevents us from enjoying our own Self. These must be cleared, or else the unique bliss of liberation while living is not enjoyed by us.

Verse 6

For gaining firm abidance (dwelling) in the Supreme Self, purity of mind is required. Hence all resolute (unbendable) seekers should strive to gain purity of mind.

Vedanta says you deserve the best: Supreme Bless. But we compromise and settle for less. Our firm resolve should be a 'Do or Die!', 'I will achieve that highest joy.' The true seeker with firm determination strives hard for purity of mind and does not consider it a difficult task.

By repeatedly saying it is difficult, we make it difficult! The simple fact is, we do not fully understand the value of true joy, and are not determined enough in our efforts to achieve it. Nothing is difficult if we put forth our best effort.

Purity of Mind is necessary for the Spiritual path and the worldly life as well. Patience is also needed. Whether the goal is Spiritual or Material, Empirical or Absolute, purity of mind is absolutely essential.

Verse 7**Means of Purification:**

Teachers prescribe many means to purify the mind, such as Yajna, Charity, Austerity, Japa, Pilgrimage, and Vows.

Tapas means ‘single-pointed ness of the mind and senses. Tapas mean conserving our energy rather than dissipating it unnecessarily.’

Since the Lord is the ultimate cause of this universe and is all-pervading, all forms are but His own manifestations. Therefore, to love and serve all beings, seeing them as God alone, is true worship. With such an attitude, the mind’s energy is not dissipated through negative thoughts or feelings.

When we conserve our energy through ‘tapas’ and redirect that energy by serving the world with devotion, we gain various results. Whether material, intellectual, or spiritual, these results can in turn be share with others. To give something away without expecting anything in return is Charity. Charity: money, time, knowledge, emotional comfort or kind words to others is charity.

When the Lord’s name is chanted with devotion, the mind gains purity and single-pointed ness. It then becomes absorbed in the name and very nature of the Lord.

All these methods of Ritual, Austerity, Charity, Chanting, and Pilgrimage are prescribed as great purifiers. However, each one of them is effective only if we practice it with proper understanding. If we do it mechanically, without faith and devotion, then it is not real spiritual practice, and naturally we do not experience any of the joys of spiritual unfoldment.

Verse 8

Which is the best means to purify the mind?

Inquiry is the best method to purify the mind.

Verse 9

There is nothing as purifying as knowledge. And many individuals purified by the penance of knowledge have attained My Beings.

Inquiry and Knowledge is the greatest path to take in purifying the mind. Knowledge removes the very cause of the Ego’s existence – the ignorance of one’s true nature as Existence – Consciousness – Bliss

Verse 10

I undertake Inquiry into the meaning of these words of the Lord for the sole purpose of gaining purity of mind.

What is the need to Inquire? Isn't it enough to merely accept the Lord's words? No, for one needs to understand how the 'penance of knowledge' purifies. The Lord also said that the knowledge which results from contemplation is the best means of purification.

The teachers and the scriptures point out the goal, but the disciple has to cross over his own ignorance and all other obstacles through intelligence, backed by the Lord's blessings. First, we must seek the blessings of the Lord.

In the path of Inquiry, instead of asking 'how' to get rid of anger, greed, and jealousy, etc, we should first try to understand what they are, where they come from, what their expressions are, and what disastrous results they may bring about. In this way, we become intensely aware of the mental impurity in its totality; and this awareness itself destroys passion immediately. Then the question of time frame is also gone.

Summary:

1. We are not fully aware of our mental impurities. When expressed, we are aware of them temporarily, but we have no real understanding of them.
2. We do not really comprehend the consequences of allowing the imperfections to persist. We must become intensely sensitive of them.
3. Biggest problem is we don't feel there is anything wrong with having these impurities. We tend to consider our vices as virtues. We justify Anger as a necessary evil. We justify Greed as a means to prosperity by insisting that dissatisfaction brings us to greater material progress.

Contemplation is a great means for purifying the mind. These four steps help to cease impurities of mind:

1. Be intensely conscious of the impurities of mind (anger, greed, passion, etc)
2. See the implications and consequences of them.
3. Understand them in their totality
4. Do not justify or glorify the impurities

Verse 11

Impurities of the Mind: Likes, Dislikes, Desire, Anger, Greed, Ego, Selfishness, etc

The basic tenet of Manah Sodhanam is that our true nature is the blissful Self, yet we suffer because of our ignorance of this fact. By studying Vedanta, our ignorance is dispelled and we understand our true nature. In spite of this understanding, however, the mind does not abide in that knowledge if we have remaining vasanas and if our identifications and attachments persist. The power of the vasanas is reduced, though.

The best method to purify the mind is Knowledge, or Inquiry.

Verse 12

All these impurities are seen only when the mind is in the WAKING STATE. When the mind is absorbed in Sleep, their effects are not seen.

All the impurities of the mind express themselves and disturb us only when the mind is awake. When the mind is in deep sleep or when absorbed in meditation, these qualities are not experienced by us.

Likes, Desires, Happiness, and Sorrow exist when the Mind and Intellect are functioning. Therefore, they belong to the Mind and not to the Self.

Since neither sleep nor ‘Absorption of Mind in the Self’ is possible **at all times**, this non-functioning of the mind is not a viable solution. And too much sleep is only escapism.

Verse 13

These impurities do not persecute a wise person even in his waking state in the manner that they persecute an ignorant individual.

If the Mind and its activities were the real problem, then everyone would be persecuted by them. An enlightened person, however, is not affected by them even though his mind is functioning. He also shows emotion and is an active participant in the world.

An Enlightened person lives and works in the world, but he is not Bound by it. For a wise person there is not such thing as distraction. Although he may display emotions such as Anger, Happiness, Affection, Enjoyment or Distaste, he still remains untouched and untroubled by them.

The Enlightened person is never deluded and is the embodiment of compassion. He interacts with other people but he has no problems of his own. He may or may not worship a form of God or Meditate. But he is never unhappy or confused. It is relatively easy to describe Brahman, but it is extremely difficult to describe the Knower of Brahman, the enlightened person.

If the Body, Mind, Emotions, the Perceptions of the World are not problematic in themselves, then why do they trouble the ignorant person? What is the real cause of sorrow?

Verse 14

Ignorance alone is the cause of sorrow. Through Inquiry one should understand its Nature and its method of operation.

The cause of sorrow is not the body, Mind, or Experience of Emotions; it is ignorance of the Self. Therefore, we must try to understand the nature of ignorance. We can only do this by Right Thinking.

Ignorance (maya) is that which cannot withstand the scrutiny of Inquiry. Ignorance remains as long as one does not conduct an Inquiry about it.

The Prescription to Ignorance is: Never Think or Inquire. Ignore whatever you have and always crave for what you do not have. Thus sorrow can be assured.

So, what is Ignorance?

Verse 15

When there exists a notion that the seen (perceived) world is real and different from me, then there alone arises the notion that the world gives me joy or sorrow.

Ignorance is the notion that the world is different from us and is absolutely real as we perceive it. The idea that one object is a source of joy and another of sorrow is our own imagination. If an object were itself a source of joy, it would give equal joy to everybody. That is why there is always someone willing to buy any object we want to get rid of. The quality of imparting joy or sorrow is not an attribute of the object itself, but is our own mental superimposition on the object. Consequently, we either run toward an object or away from it. In short, the notions born of ignorance are:

1. the world is Real
2. the world is separate from myself
3. it is a source of joy or sorrow

The result of all this is ignorance in action.

Verse 16

There arises Likes and Dislikes in the Mind. Prompted by them, in vain, I pursue or withdraw from the object of the world.

Likes and dislikes are what drive us to pursue one thing and withdraw from another. We are never permanently satisfied with one object. We keep running back and forth between objects.

Verse 17

I become happy when I gain my desired object, and become unhappy if I am unsuccessful in my pursuit of it. Thus, this suffering has come to me due to false superimposition.

When we gain an object of our liking, we are happy. . . for a short while.

When we don't get what we like, we are unhappy and miserable for a long time.

Because our like and dislikes are constantly changing, the causes of our joy and sorrow also keep changing. He who has no likes and dislikes and is free from the pairs of opposites is a "samnyasi"

Becoming dependent upon others for our joy and sorrow, and being buffeted by the pairs of opposites in this ever-changing world and ever-changing conditions of our mind, is called "samsara" (birth-death cycle).

Samsara (life-death) is projected due to false superimposition. The notion that an object is beautiful or ugly is our own idea superimposed on the object. Because of these projections we also suffer in relationships, although the other people involved may be completely unaware of our feelings.

A Sage or Noble person is one who has complete endurance for his own sorrow. Ut in other people's sorrow they are extremely compassionate.

We have seen what ignorance is and how it expresses itself. Now that the disease has been diagnosed, we have to find the Right Treatment.

Right Treatment

Verse 18

(How to) eradicate the impurities of my mind and reach the Absolute Good.

Whether one is living a Secular life or living Spiritual life, Purity of Mind is essential! Impurities of the mind manifest themselves when the mind is functioning (awake state).

Ignorance is the cause of our problems. The nature of Ignorance is to see the world as separate from us, to consider it as the Absolute reality and the source of joy or sorrow. This idea creates likes and dislikes in our mind: We run towards the things we like; run away from those we dislike. This delusion is called “Samsara” (life & death cycle) and is the result of our own projections.

There are six Impurities of the Mind: Desire, Anger, Greed, Delusion, Arrogance, and Envy. All are various forms of Desire. Thus, Desire is the root of all other problems.

Desire is composed of STRONG Likes and Attachments, Infatuations, Lust, Passion, Ambition, etc. in varying intensities. Let us not become a slave to Desire, the “root of all evil”!

How to Rise Above These Weaknesses (Verse 19 - 22)

Verse 19

One should:

1. Conquer Desire by the non-entertainment of fanciful thoughts. (Verse 19)
2. Conquer Anger by renouncing desire. (Verse 20)
3. Conquer Greed by observing the calamitous nature of wealth. (Verse 21)
4. Conquer by Fear by understanding the Truth (Verse 22)

What actually creates Desire is the entertaining of fanciful thought about an object; the desire to have/own an object or person (Sankalpa). Our attachment to anything, whether it is a material object, a pet or a person, is all because of this fanciful thinking. “No one can become a yogi without the renunciation of “sankalpa” {*the Bhagavad Gita*}

There is clear distinction between NEED and DESIRE. When we are hungry, there is a natural need for food. When we are tired, there is nothing wrong in resting. The desire for money, marriage, children, etc is not a problem in itself. But when a Desire becomes EXCESSIVE, there is an increased amount of indulgence and that Desire becomes unnatural.

Imagination, Superimposition = Incompleteness

Thus, an unhealthy desire is created by our Imagination, our Superimposition of beauty and joy on an object, and a feeling that without that object we are Incomplete. Consequently, we continuously think about the object of our desire.

Desire by itself is not a problem – rather it is the UNCONTROLLED DESIRE for worldly things that is the problem. “Oh, Arjuna, I am that desire which is not opposed to righteousness” [*Bhagavad Gita*]

When we sit for meditations and try to quiet the mind, two things happen

1. Remembering past enjoyments
2. planning for future enjoyments

We want to get rid of these desires but are unable to do so because, deep within, we secretly enjoy them!

When we run away from temptations we leave our forwarding address behind. We should not entertain fanciful thoughts which create lust, passion, or any other kind of obsession that can distract the mind during meditation.

Even when we are not consciously entertaining desires, those desires just seem to arise by themselves. This happens because of deep, unconscious impressions, including those from past lives.

When a thought arises from the pool of our old vasanas we are not held responsible for them.

But once we have become conscious of it, we are responsible for whatever we do with that thought thereafter.

‘Thoughts that begin as a small ripple become an ocean when BROODED upon for a length of time.’

Once a thought becomes an ocean, we cannot cross it – we drown in it! But after a thought has risen, if we think that it is useless and do not entertain it any further, then that thought goes away.

There is no way of conquering desires besides their non-entertainment. The only way to remove power from a thought is not to entertain it. If we Brood over a desire and then want to get rid of it later, it will be extremely difficult to do so.

The mind has no power to do anything without our conscious or unconscious support. We ourselves supply its energy. The only way to remove power from a thought is to NOT ENTERTAIN it.

Anger

Anger and Agitation arises only because of unfulfilled desire, and the intensity of anger depends upon the intensity of desire. When we remove all our Likes-Dislikes, Desires, and Expectations, we have no reason to be angry.

Desires for righteous living such as desires for social integration or for personal development should not be given up.

Anger expressed as a reaction to something is not good. But anger expressed as an action, devoid of any selfish purpose, it can be good. When anger arises out of frustration for which we regret later, is not good. Such anger destroys the person who is angry as well as the one towards whom the anger is directed. Instead, if we express anger when someone criticizes noble values or insult someone, then no harm is meant by the anger and we remain in control of it. Therefore, anger for the purpose of correction can be good but when it takes control of us, it is not good. We can learn to treat anger as a coat: keep it on a hanger and use it only when needed!

Greed, Jealousy and Envy

Unfulfilled desires cause Agitation and Anger. If Desire is fulfilled, it becomes Greed.

Our philosophy becomes, “More-ism”, give me more. One can overcome greed by seeing the calamitous (devastating) nature of wealth. A greedy person wants more and more for their own aggrandizement, self-gratification, etc. Greed for money, power, or pleasure corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. An individual full of greed becomes a very discontented person and, ironically, he becomes a beggar for happiness from the outside world.

Greed wants more and more, even to the extent of acquiring other people’s wealth. Jealousy thinks, “it’s alright if I do not get what I want, but the other person must suffer and not get it either!”

The nature of a greedy person is to want more and more. The nature of an envious person is to think, “Why is this person getting ahead of me? I must pull him down!”

Greed is conquered by contentment: “Perform your duties and then, with whatever you get as a result of that karma, which is the blessing of the Lord, be happy with it”. Need and Greed are two different things. Need has limits, but greed has none. When I sit to eat, I reach a point where I had enough. But with Greed, there is none. Gandhi said, “In this world there is enough to fulfill the need of all, but not the Greed of even one”.

Another variant of Desire is Jealousy and Envy. When another person gets something that we desire, we become jealous of him. If we do not have political ambition, then we will not be jealous of politicians. As long as one has no desire to join the order of renunciation, he will not be jealous of a swami. Therefore it is due to the nature and intensity of our own desire and ambition that we develop various jealousies.

Fear

Where there is Desire, Anger, and Greed, there will also be Fear. We Fear losing our job, fear bad health, and of losing friends. Some people have a general feeling of fear without knowing its cause.

How can these fears be removed? **Only by realizing the Truth and abiding (dwelling) in our nature as the one non-dual, Absolute Reality.** The moment we create a duality, (a distinction between “you” and “I”), there is Fear.

We ourselves create divisions and then become afraid of the other. But if there is recognition of the one non-dual Reality, the infinite “I am,” there will be no fear. Similarly, when there is no Desire, there is no fear. Therefore, fear should be overcome by realization of the Truth.

Verse 20

- Grief and Delusion should be conquered by Self-Knowledge,
- Hypocrisy should be conquered by Serving the Noble Ones.
- Obstacles in yoga should be conquered by Silence, and
- Injury to anyone should be conquered by Controlling one’s physical activities.

It is from ignorance and delusion that grief arises. When you realize that all this world is but the one Self, how can grief or delusion remain? Grief automatically disappears upon the removal of delusion.

Self-knowledge is the ability to see the Truth. When I know that I am this Self (*the Paramatma*) of the nature of pure Consciousness, and I am not this body, mind, intellect, or ego, then there is no room for grief and delusion.

Grief is related to the past, fear to the future, and delusion to the present.

Brooding over the past leads to Sorrow. When we think about the future, it causes fear and we deep wondering what is going to happen.

In the present are full of confusion. Grief, Fear, and Delusion will also persist as long as we remain with the framework of time, but when we gain knowledge of the self which is beyond the three periods of time, then they all disappear.

Hypocrisy, Pretentiousness, or pretending to be something other than who one really is. This kind of Hypocrisy can end only when one serves noble people.

Real Seekers regard “Super Natural Powers” as obstacles and not a meaningful result. One can get rid of obstacles which arise due to the practice of yoga by observing Silence. Silence, or reticence, is a great virtue by which we can accomplish anything.

We should neither publicize the fact that we meditate nor encourage the development of yogic powers. When powers come to great seekers they keep quiet and remain detached from them. Otherwise, others will not allow us to do what we are really trying to accomplish; they would want you to demonstrate your powers.

Verse 21

- ▣ Sorrow caused by other beings should be overcome by Compassion,
- ▣ Phenomenal sorrow by practicing Equanimity of Mind,
- ▣ Bodily affliction by Yoga, and
- ▣ Sleep by sattivika Habits.

Sorrows experienced by us are those caused by:

1. Beings around: family members, neighbors, friends, or enemies.
2. Unseen phenomenal forces
3. Those from Within.

To remove these three causes of sorrow we chant “Santih, Santih, Santih” (*Peace*)

We should have Compassion for all living beings and living creatures (mosquitoes). If you have Compassion for mosquitoes, they will go away.

With Phenomenal Forces: To Hot-Cold, torrential rains, hurricanes; Under such conditions, your mind becomes agitated and we go on complaining unnecessarily. Complaining about the weather will do nothing. In these extreme conditions, we can have peace by practicing total equanimity (*composure*), absorbing the mind in the Self. Equipose (*balance*) and serenity of mind can be achieved by various methods. The person who follows the path of knowledge looks at things as a matter of fact and accepts them as they are.

Then there are the sorrows born from ourselves. In particular the Diseases and Discomforts of our own body. Sometimes the medical advice and medication does not help. The best method to endure pain and suffering is from our own spiritual practice. Strength comes from within, not from outside.

The greatest yoga-bala, or strength of yoga, is dropping one’s identification with the body. Having no identification with the body rather than will power is the greatest virtue. Will power has its limits and can eventually break. Forgiveness, Patience, Honesty, and love have no limits.

Besides physical sleep, there is mental sleep, intellectual sleep and spiritual sleep. Some never want to wake up from their ignorance. Some are spiritual sleep and are afraid to be disturbed from their usual way of thinking!

One way to overcome mental sleepiness is through the cultivation of pure, noble habits, like controlling our eating habits. Eating light, vegetarian foods automatically eliminates non-vegetarian and other heavy foods. We should first control the quantity of food we eat by eating a little three times a day. One should sit down while eating; no eating while talking on the phone or moving around. Have a fixed time for eating. Avoid eating animals as our stomach is not meant to be a graveyard!

Pure habits that have to be practiced are not related to food alone but to proper thinking as well. The kinds of movies we watch, the literature we read, and the discussions we have with people also affect our mind. Exercising 10-minutes every day is better than 3-hours of exercise once a week. All these influence the mind.

When these noble values are developed and we follow a routine, the good habits themselves change us and make us feel energetic. As a result, our physical sleep is reduced, our mental alertness and right thinking is improved. And less trips to the doctor's office.

Verse 22

- The qualities of Rajas and Tamas should be conquered by Sattva,
- The qualities of Sattva by Samadhi (meditation),
- Man can conquer all these in a quick manner by Devotion to his Guru

We generally live under the influence of three Moods or Gunas (*detailed on the Gita ch. 14, 17, & 18*)

1. Rajas - Desire, Anger, and too much Activity. The person feels guilty about sitting down quietly.
2. Tamas - Sleepy, Inadvertence (oversight), Carelessness, Lack of Alertness, Over-indulgence, and Procrastination or Postponement.
3. Sattva - Contemplation, Devotion, Alertness, and Inquiry.

Tamasic: Postponement is when a person knows and remembers the duties he has to perform but keeps saying it can be done tomorrow. In Inadvertence the person doesn't remember what he has to do. (Inadvertence is when the person has an unintentional omission resulting from failure to notice something).

The pursuit of knowledge, literature, fine arts, music, and science are expressions of Sattva. Overcome Tamas and Rajas by Sattva. This means that laziness should be conquered by activity, but the motivating forces of Desire, Anger, and Passion should be removed first so that work is done in a selfless attitude, as worship of God. There is nothing wrong in action itself, but let the action be selfless so that the effects of Rajas and Tamas will be removed. When the mind becomes highly Sattvic, it will become absorbed and quiet in the Self. A quiet mind cannot bind you.

Slowly change your attitude from one of Tamas to Rajas and from Rajas to Sattva. Then Sattva will take you to realization of the Self.

One can conquer all these Gunas quickly by devotion to his Guru. All things are possible by pure, total, and unconditional devotion to his teacher. Though we may claim that we have devotion to our teacher, it is generally "conditioned" by many things. . . (What the guru should/ should not do; always smile, show no anger).

We have so many notions and conditions in our mind that we deprive ourselves of the great gain of Self-realization. The devotee who has great devotion to his guru will be liberated in as much time as it takes a river to become one with the ocean into which it merges. It takes a long time to cultivate that faith, but once the faith is there, we are liberated in no time.

Verse 23

- I have been constantly reflecting on this teaching.
- I do see a gradual reduction in my Impurities.

Whenever Anger, Fear, Passion, or Jealousy arises, I become aware of it and analyze why and from where it arises. Meditation is not just sitting down once a day, it is constant observation, moment to moment, of all our actions, reactions, emotions and responses. All one's thoughts become as clear as an object in one's hand.

Verse 24

By the grace of the Lord and of my teacher, what is there in this world that cannot be accomplished by me? Hence, I am now free from all anxieties.

It is not that all problems have gone away or that negative thoughts do not come, but we now understand from where problems arise, and we are aware of their whole play.

Verse 25

I have now gain the purity of mind and my intellect will abide (dwell) in the Self. Seeing this world as my own blissful Self, I shall happily roam about – ever free!

My Impurities are now vanishing. My mind and my restless intellect is quieted and absorbed in my own true nature. Experiencing my blissful nature I will see this world also not as sorrow but as bliss. Thus ever liberated, I shall roam about.

If I realize my own blissful nature, then what? I will remain as Brahman and there I shall remain.