

"Each soul is potentially divine. And the goal is to manifest the divinity within!"

Jai Sri Krsna!!

The **fifth** divine quality is **(दमः) Restraint of Senses**. It is the restraint of the organs of the knowledge as well as organs of action. A conviction that it's vain to hope for any happiness from worldly enjoyments leads to restraint of senses. In yoga parlance, '*pratyahara*' is the principal word used for the restraint of the senses. *Pratyahara* usually means withdrawal of the senses. A good example here is that of tortoise coming in contact with external object withdraws all its limbs. In a similar manner, one should try to restrain all senses by withdrawing away from people, events, objects and circumstances that will create worldly desires. This does not mean to run away from the world but essentially live in the world without indulging into the activities that generate inappropriate desires (Here inappropriate is referred to anything that is not in accordance with principles of Srimad Bhagavad Gita).

The question arises - why is it important to restrain the senses? Lord Krishna in Shloka 4.39 says "*Shraddha va labhate gyanam, tatparah sanyatenindriyah; gyana labdhva param santim achirenadhi gacchati.*" This translated states "*One achieves self-perception by intense conviction, constancy and self-control, self-perception leaves one speedily to supreme peace.*" Imagine our body like an energy generator. The sense organs in the body want to engage with the world. If we give our sense organs the power to consume all energy then we continually engage with worldly matters and leads to unproductive use of human vitality. If we restrain our senses then we have that untapped extra amount of energy. This energy can be channelized towards meditation and other realms of spiritual discovery and spiritual progress.

The next question arises how to restrain the senses? There are several ways as prescribed by the Lord. One way is by overall transformation of self through activities like seva, daanam etc which has a chain effect leading to overall transformation. So for example, if one has developed quality of daanam (दानम्) and/or helping others, then the pravritti becomes that of unselfishness and non-arrogance. Then such a pravritti does not remain controlled by our senses and/or remains attached, thereby leading to the senses become pure and soft. If a spiritual seeker's objective is to restrain his senses then his pravritti will channelize towards doing his duty with total surrender to Lord and gradually selfishness, attachment, desires etc wane away.

Second is through the bhakti marg, a constant naam jap of Lord's name, a constant alignment with Lord through remembrance leads us to remain in awareness of Self and helps to restrain the senses. For example, someone is coming and trying to gossip about someone else to you; most of time the normal tendency is to engage in the conversation that delights oneself (its masala food for sense of hearing). However, if spiritual seeker is in alignment with lord through constant Naam Jap and in constant awareness (in state of total perception); then a spiritual seeker will not entertain such a discussion.

Thirdly, it's the satsang and scriptural studies, that act as a constant reminder of To Do's and Not To Do's which again reinforces in us at times when the senses are running and one reigns in to control them. For example – Many a times while eating food, one may enjoy it and wants to eat more than its required sheer for the taste and liking of it. The shloka 6.17 "*Yukt ahara viharsasya, yuktacestasya karmasu; Yuktavsvapnav bodhaysa, yogo bahvati dukaha*" translated "*This yoga puts an end to all suffering of one who is moderate in eating and recreation, moderate in exertion of his work, moderate in sleep and keep awake*" Acts as a constant reminder of moderation in eating and control in urge of further indulgement.

Most importantly, one has to be on constant watch of not allowing his senses take control and engage in desires or likes/dislikes. In summary, ***Damah (दमः) helps to expedite our spiritual journey.***

Hari Om! 🙏