

# Srimad Bhagavad Gita

Chapter 6  
Dhyaana Yogah:  
Yoga of Meditation

Transliterated Sanskrit Text

Free Translation

&

Brief Explanation

By

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Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 6 (Part-1)  
Dhyaana Yogah: Yoga of Meditation  
**T.N.Sethumadhavan**

Preamble

The Gita has been described as an elaborate commentary on the *mahavakya* of the Chhandogya Upanishad, '*tat tvam asi* - that thou art'. The first six chapters elucidate the word 'thou' which stands for the individual self. It is called the *Twam-pada*. The second set of six chapters deals with the word 'that' which denotes *brahman*. This is called the *Tat-pada*. The last set of six chapters establishes the identity of the individual self and brahman. It is called the *Asi-pada*, which establishes the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul.

Another way of looking at these three sets of six chapters each is to consider the first six chapters as emphasizing *karmayoga*, the second six *bhaktiyoga* and the last six *jnanayoga*. The term 'yoga' here stands for 'path'. Thus we have the three paths of karma, bhakti and jnana. These three paths are, however, not independent of one another, but they together form a synthetic whole. None of these paths can be practiced without the help of the other two; only the emphasis varies according to the temperament and level of spiritual development of the aspirant.

Chapter 2 described the sage of perfection, his mental equipoise and the methods of self-evolution to guide us in pure meditation and detached thinking. Chapter 3 gave a scientific treatment of the Karma Yoga - the path of action. The principle of 'Renunciation of action in knowledge' had been propounded in Chapter 4. As there was confusion in Arjuna between the ideas of 'action' and 'renunciation of action', Chapter 5 explained the 'way of renunciation of action' under two methods Viz. 1. Renunciation of the sense of doership and 2. Abandoning attachment and anxiety about the fruits of actions. A person who has followed the teachings of The Lord thus far would have got rid off his doubts. He would be fit for the higher purposes of meditation and Self-contemplation. How this is done is the theme of the present Chapter 6. This chapter concludes one of the sections in the thought-flow of the Gita as explained in the beginning.

This Chapter explains how one can give up one's weaknesses and positively grow into a healthier, stronger and integrated personality. This technique is called "*Dhyana Yoga*" or 'Path of meditation'. It discusses this path as auxiliary to the practice of both Karma Yoga and Sankhya Yoga.

Control over the body, senses, mind and intellect is extremely necessary in Dhyana Yoga. These instruments are collectively called as "Atma" and hence this Chapter is also called 'The Yoga of Self-Control'. Many classical commentators, particularly Madhusudan Saraswati, have therefore associated this Chapter with the *Ashtanga Yoga* of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*.

The first nine verses of this Chapter reiterate the three stages of spiritual development as described in the previous chapter. A yogi with worldly vasanas, needs karma yoga, the path of action, to evolve spiritually. Through action he sheds his vasanas and becomes a Sanyasi. A Sanyasi, in a state of renunciation, needs meditation and quietitude to reach the ultimate state of Jnani. Both Karma Yogi and Sanyasi aim at the same goal of Self realization but their *sadhanas* (spiritual practices) differ. Whatever be the *sadhana*, every seeker has to put in his own effort to raise himself.

Though the Yogi and Sanyasi are both on the spiritual path, the Sanyasi alone, having developed a dispassion for the world, is capable for meditation and realization. Details of the environmental, physical, mental and intellectual preparations necessary to take the seat of meditation are elaborated here. When a seeker follows all these preparations he will become freed from desire, possessiveness, and the consequent sorrow. He will then become established in Yoga and be fully prepared to enter into meditation.

## The Text

RENUNCIATION AND ACTION ARE ONE

**sri bhagavaan uvaacha  
anaashritah karmaphalam kaaryam karma karoti yah  
sa sannyasi cha yogee cha na niragnirna chaakriyah // 6.1 //**

*Sri Bhagavan said*

*He who performs his bounden duty without depending on the fruits of his actions - he is a sannyasin and a yogin, not he who has merely renounced the sacred fire; even so he is no yogi, who has merely given up all action.*

So far, two currents of thought were discussed viz. 1. `Renunciation of the sense of agency' (Sanyas) and 2. `Renunciation of attachment to the fruits of actions' (Yoga).

The Sanyasi is himself the Yogi and the seekers must therefore engage themselves in noble works renouncing both their sense of doership and attachment to the fruits of their actions. Sanyasa or renunciation has little to do with outward works. It is an inward attitude. It is mental purity and intellectual equipoise.

Arjuna thought Sanyasa as mere abandonment of all activities, symbolized here by the word `fire'. To become a Sanyasi, it is not necessary to give up the daily sacrificial fire and other rituals. To abstain from these without the spirit of renunciation is futile.

**yam sannyasamiti praahuryogam tam viddhi paandava  
na hyasannyastasankalpo yogee bhavati kashchana // 6.2 //**

*O Pandava, please know what they call renunciation to be disciplined activity, for none becomes a Yogi who has not renounced his selfish desire.*

The word `Sankalpa' means the mental faculty that makes plans for the future expecting the results of the plans so made. No one can become a Karma Yogi who plans future actions and expects the fruits of such actions. Only a devotee who renounced the thoughts of fruits of his actions can become a Yogi of steady mind because the thoughts of fruits of actions always cause mental disturbances.

Sanyasa i.e. renunciation consists in the accomplishment of the necessary action without an inward striving for reward. This is true yoga, firm control over oneself, complete self-possession. This verse says that disciplined activity (Yoga) is just as good as renunciation or Sanyasa.

Karma Yoga practiced without regard to the fruit of actions forms a stepping stone and an external aid to Dhyana Yoga or meditation. How Karma Yoga is a means to a better and greater meditation is explained in the following verses.

PATH AND THE GOAL

**aarurukshormuner yogam karma kaaranamuchyate  
yogaaroodhasya tasyaiva shamah kaaranamuchyate // 6.3 //**

*For a sage who wishes to attain to yoga, action is said to be the means; for the same sage who has attained to yoga serenity is said to be the means.*

For a man who cannot practice meditation for a prolonged period and who is not able to keep his mind steady in meditation, action or work is a means of establishing himself in concentration and self-improvement. By working in the world with no egocentric concept of agency and desire for the fruits of actions, the mind gets purified and makes it fit for the practice of steady meditation.

When the required amount of concentration is achieved and his mind conquered, his agitations get well under control. In that state of mental growth his mind thoroughly gets fixed in the Self. These two means are not contradictory. Selfless work is necessary for a beginner; but a developed seeker needs more calmness and self-withdrawal for deep meditation to realize the Self. All his actions are then performed with perfect equanimity,

**yadaa hi nendriyaartheshu na karmaswanushajjate  
sarvasankalpasannyaasee yogaaroodhas tadochyate // 6.4 //**

*When a man is not attached to sense objects or to actions, having renounced all thoughts, he is said to have attained Yoga.*

Sri Krishna explains the physical and mental condition of the *Yogarudha* - the one who is established in Yoga. The Lord says that when one is without mental attachment to sense-objects or actions in the outer world, he is said to have obtained mastery over the mind.

When the mind is without even traces of attachment either to the sense-objects or to the fields of activity, even then it is possible that it will get distracted by its own power of

longing and desiring. Such disturbances caused by the inner forces of the mind (Sankalpa) are more devastating than the ones caused by the external world of objects.

Sri Krishna indicates that the one who is said to have gained a complete mastery over his mind is he who has not only withdrawn himself from all sense-contacts and activities in the outer world but has also conquered all the Sankalpa-disturbances arising in his own mind. Such an individual, at the moment of meditation, in that inward state, is termed Yogarudha.

**uddharedaatmanaatmaanam naatmaanamavasaadayet  
atmaiva hyaatmano bandhuraatmaiva ripuraatmanah // 6.5 //**

*Let a man lift himself by himself; let him not degrade himself; for, he himself is his friend and he himself is his enemy.*

Sri Krishna declares that 'man should lift himself by himself'. Man, if he wants to raise himself from an animal existence to a noble life with all cultural and spiritual possibilities which lie dormant in him, has to convert the lower instincts in him to a higher level of perfection which is his essential nature.

Man is basically a plural personality - he thinks he ought to be a morally strong, ethically perfect, physically loving and socially disciplined ideal personality but in actual practice he is always a victim of his own attachments and aversions, likes and dislikes, love and hatred etc. So long as he does not realize his own duality, there cannot be any religion for him. But if he wants to make the lower in him as bright as the higher, he has to adopt the technique called Religion. The processes by which the lower is brought under control and discipline of the higher are called spiritual practices.

This process of self-rehabilitation cannot be executed with any outside help but has to be done all by himself unto himself, all alone, all the way. Teachers, scriptures and temples etc. are all guides only and the actual achievement depends on the seeker's ability to come out of his misunderstandings.

The step suggested so far goes only half way and the other half as suggested by The Lord, is to see that the self thereafter does not fall down to its old level of mundane existence. When the lower allows itself to be corrected by the higher, the higher is called his friend. But when the lower does not allow itself to be controlled by the higher, the latter is considered to be his enemy.

“The Supreme is within us. It is the consciousness underlying the individualized consciousness of every day life but not proportionate to it. The two are different in kind, though the Supreme is realizable by one who is prepared to lose his life in order to save it. For the most part we are unaware of the Self in us because our attention is engaged by objects which we like or dislike. We must get away from them, to become aware of the Divine in us. If we do not realize the pointlessness, the irrelevance and the squalor of our ordinary life, the true Self becomes the enemy of our ordinary life.

The Universal Self and the personal self are not antagonistic to each other. The Universal Self can be the friend or the foe of the personal self. If we subdue our pretty cravings and desires, if we do not exert our selfish will, we become the channel of the Universal Self. If our impulses are under control and if our personal self offers itself to the Universal Self, the latter becomes our guide and teacher. Every one of us has the freedom to rise or fall and our future is in our own hands". Dr.S.Radhakrishnan.

IDEA OF FRIENDSHIP AND ENMITY CLARIFIED

**bandhuraatmaatmanastasya yenaatmaivaatmanaa jitah  
anaatmanastu shatrutwe vartetaatmaiva shatruvat // 6.6 //**

*To him who has conquered himself by himself, his own self is a friend, but to him who has not conquered himself, his own self is hostile like an external enemy.*

To the extent that the lower in us withdraws itself from its identifications with the body and sense-organs, feelings and emotions to that extent it (the ego) is said to have come under the influence of the nobler in us.

To such an ego the Self is the friend. But where the ego rebels against the higher, to that unconquered self or uncontrolled ego the Diviner Self is as inimical as an external foe.

The higher Self becomes a friend to the lower if the latter allows itself to be influenced by the former. The Diviner becomes inimical to the lower limited ego when the latter resists nobler aspirations. We are therefore called upon to master the lower self by the higher. The point is that the lower self is not to be destroyed. It can be used as a helper, if it is held in check.

**jitaatmanah prashaantasya paramaatmaa samaahitah  
sheetoshna sukha dukkhesu tathaa maanaapamaanayoh // 6.7 //**

*When one has conquered one's (lower)self and has attained in the realm of self-mastery, his Supreme Self abides ever focused; he is at peace in cold and heat, in pleasure and pain, in honor and dishonor.*

This verse explains what exactly is achieved in the state of mental equipoise called 'Yogarudha'. When the stage of Yogarudha or the state of mental equipoise is reached, the mind is held steadfast in the contemplation of the Supreme and the seeker is capable of maintaining consistency of meditation in all circumstances, favorable and unfavorable.

Sri Krishna enumerates all possible threats that an individual may come across against his maintaining mental tranquility. These impediments fall into three categories viz.

- relating to body - heat and cold,
- relating to mind - pleasure and pain
- relating to intellect - honor and dishonor.

The Lord says that in spite of all these obstacles in man's life the Supreme Self is to be the focal point for constant realization. The man of serenity remains unruffled in all circumstances, in all environments and in all companies.

“This is the state of blessedness of the person who has established himself in unity with the Universal Self. He is a *jitatman* whose calm and serenity are not disturbed by the pairs of the opposites. The self in the body is generally absorbed by the world of dualities, heat and cold, pain and pleasure but when it controls the senses and masters the world, the self becomes free. The Supreme Self is not different from the self in the body. When the self is bound by the modes of prakriti or nature, it is called *kshetrajna*; when it is freed from them, the same self is called the Supreme Self”. - Dr.S.Radhakrishnan

**jnaana vijnaana triptaatmaa kootastho vijitendriyah  
yuktah ityuchyate yogee samaloshtaashmakaanchanah // 6.8 //**

*He is said to be a steadfast Yogi who is satisfied with knowledge and wisdom, who remains unshaken, who has conquered the senses, and to whom a lump of earth, a stone and gold are the same.*

Sri Krishna says that an individual, self-controlled and serene, who contemplates constantly on the nature of the Self in all circumstances in life, soon gets full divine satisfaction and becomes an unshakeable Yogi.

Knowledge gained by study of Sastras is Gnana and one's own experience of the teachings of Sastras is Vignana. Kootastha is the anvil. Red hot iron pieces are hammered on the anvil for giving proper shape to them but the anvil itself remains unchanged in spite of receiving repeated hammerings. So too, the seeker is called changeless-Kootastha- whose heart remains unchanged in spite of it being surrounded by the worldly objects. He is unperturbed by things and happenings of the world and is therefore said to be equal-minded to the events of this changing world. Such a saint remains tranquil with equal mental vision in all conditions of life. To him a clod of mud, a stone and gold are all the same. Thus equanimity of mind is the touchstone for spiritual evolution.

**suhrinmitraaryudaaseena madhyastha dweshya bandhushu  
saadhushwapi cha paapeshu samabuddhirvishishyate // 6.9 //**

*He who has equal regard for well-wishers, friends, enemies, the indifferent, the neutral, the hateful, relatives, the righteous and the unrighteous, excels.*

In the previous verse it was stated that the man of perfection develops equal vision to all the things of the outside world. Here the nature of relationship of a man of perfect equipoise with the other living beings of the world is discussed.

The Lord says that such a man of excellence regards all relationships with equal love and consideration irrespective of whether they are friends or foes or the indifferent or the

neutral or the hateful or the nearest relations. He does not make any distinction between the righteous and unrighteous, the good and the bad.

In realizing the Self in him, he sees unity in all diversities and observes a rhythm in the world outside. To him, who has realized himself to be the Self which is all pervading, the entire universe becomes his own Self and therefore his relationship with other parts of the universe is equal and the same.

The method by which one can attain this highest goal with an assured result is called Meditation which is explained exhaustively in the following verses.

#### DIRECTIONS FOR THE PRACTICE OF YOGA

**yogee yunjeeta satatamaatmaanam rahasi sthitah  
ekaakee yatachittatmaa niraasheeraparigrahaah // 6.10 //**

*A Yogi should always try constantly to concentrate his mind (on the Supreme Self), remaining in solitude, living alone with the mind and body controlled, free from desires and possessions.*

In the previous verses Arjuna wanted to know the ways and means of achieving the constant experience of inward equilibrium. Sri Krishna explains the methods of self-development and the technique of self-perfection which can be attained by all. The method taught by The Lord requires the seekers to exert themselves by constantly practicing concentration which is called meditation.

The pre-requisites for practicing meditation are:

- **Rahasi Sthitah - Remaining in solitude:** Sitting in solitude one should practice meditation. This does not mean that meditation can be practiced only in jungles or in lonely caves. It means that even in one's own home one should try to withdraw himself mentally and physically from the normal preoccupations and retire to a secluded spot for practicing meditation. Solitude can be gained only when there is mental withdrawal from the world outside. One who is full of desires and constantly thinking about sense-objects cannot gain solitude even in a remote forest. Solitude lifts our hearts and exalts our minds. In a world which is daily growing noisier, the duty of the civilized man is to have moments of thoughtful stillness. Retiring to a quiet place, we should keep off all external distractions.
- **Ekaki – Alone:** For the purposes of meditation one has to be physically alone. His success depends upon the amount of self-control he is adopting in his daily life.
- **Yatachittatmana - Self-controlled.** He must not be excited, strained or anxious. There should be no restlessness or turbulence. The heart must become clean if it is to reflect God who is to be seen and known only by the pure in heart.



- Niraasheer - Free from desires: Worry about daily needs, about earning and spending, disturbs meditation and takes us away from the life of the spirit. So we must be free from desire and anxiety born of it, from greed and fear. We should expect nothing, insist on nothing.
- Aparigraha - Free from longing for possessions: This is a spiritual state and not a material condition. We must control the appetite for possessions; free ourselves from the tyranny of belongings. One cannot hear God's voice, if one is restless and self-centered, if one is dominated by feelings of pride, jealousy or possessiveness.

“The Gita points out our happiness is inward. It invites our attention to the manner of our life, the state of human consciousness, which does not depend upon the outward machinery of life. The body may die and the world pass away but the life in spirit endures. Our treasures are not the things of the world that perish but the knowledge and love of God that endure. We must get out of the slavery to things to gain the glad freedom of spirit.

Here the Lord develops the technique of mental discipline on the lines of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. When one starts meditating upon the Truth within these parameters, he is considered to be the true seeker trying to achieve the highest in life. The main purpose of this exercise is to raise our consciousness from its ordinary waking condition to higher levels until it attains Union with the Supreme. The human mind is ordinarily turned outwards. Absorption in the mechanical and material sides of life leads to misbalanced condition of consciousness.

Yoga attempts to explore the inner world of consciousness and helps to integrate the conscious and the sub-conscious. We must divest our minds of all sensual desires, abstract our attention from all external objects and absorb it in the object of meditation. By summoning all the energies of the mind and fixing them on one point, we raise the level of reference from the empirical to the real, from observation to vision and let the spirit take possession of our whole being. The practice must be constant. It is no use to taking to meditation by fits and starts. A continuous creative effort is necessary for developing the higher, the intenser form of consciousness”. - Dr. S.Radhakrishnan.

#### OTHER AIDS TO MEDITATION

The Lord now explains the other aids to meditation like modes of sitting, eating, recreation etc. in the following verses.

**shuchau deshe pratishthaapya sthiramaasanamaatmanah  
naatyucchritam naatineecham chailaajinakushottaram // 6.11 //**

*Having established in a clean spot his firm seat, neither too high nor too low, made of a cloth, a skin and Kusa grass, one over the other.*

**tatraikaagram manah kritwaa yatachittendriyakriyah  
upavishyaasane yunjyaadyogamaatmavishuddhaye // 6.12 //**

*There, having made the mind one-pointed, with actions of the mind and sense controlled, let him, seated on the seat, practice yoga for the purification of the self.*

Sri Krishna now gives a complete and exhaustive explanation of the technique of meditation. The seat for practice of meditation should be in a clean place. The external conditions have a direct bearing on the human mind. The chances for the seeker to maintain a pure mental condition are more in a clean place. A tidy atmosphere causes the least mental disturbances.

The meditator should sit steady (sthiram) in his seat without moving his body in any direction since physical movements destroy the mental concentration and inner equipoise. In order to get established in a firm posture, it would be advisable to sit in any comfortable seat with the vertebral column erect, fingers interlocked and hands thrown in front.

The seat of meditation should not be too high or too low. Too high a seat causes a sense of insecurity and a seat too low may cause bodily pains. During meditation the heart becomes slightly slow causing even a slight fall in blood pressure and to that extent one gets withdrawn in himself. At such a time of low resistance, the position of the seat plays a vital part.

The mattress of Kusa Grass on the ground covered by a deer skin and a piece of cloth on top of it protects one from dampness, cold and heat.

Sitting properly by itself is not Yoga. While proper physical condition is necessary for inducing right mental attitude for spiritual practices, by itself it cannot assure any spiritual self development. Hence Sri Krishna tells here what a seeker should do in the seat of meditation having brought his body in a steady condition and how his mind and intellect should be kept engaged.

These instructions of The Lord are: One should make the mind single pointed by subduing the faculty of imagination and activities of the sense organs. Although single pointedness is the nature of the mind, by virtue of its capacity for imagination or wishful thinking and on account of the pulls and pressures of the external sense objects on the sense organs, it gets wild and scattered. The Lord says that if these two sources of dissipation are closed, the mind will get automatically single pointed. Keeping the mind contemplating on the Ultimate Self constantly is the inner Yoga suggested here.

The effect of such meditation is inner purification. A purified mind is the one wherein there are no agitations and when the mind becomes thus steady and pure, it discovers its own Real Nature just like one understands himself by looking at his own image in a mirror. The purification of the heart, *chittasuddhi*, is a matter of discipline. It is a

disciplined disinterestedness. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Wisdom is a condition in a being at rest.

**samam kaayashirogreevam dhaarayannachalam sthirah  
samprekshya naasikaagram swam dishashchaanavalokayan // 6.13 //**

*Let him firmly hold his body, head and neck erect and still, gazing at the tip of his nose without looking around.*

The Lord tells that the meditator should firmly hold his body in such a way that his vertebral column is completely erect - the head, neck and the spinal column should be vertical to the horizontal seat. Holding the body firmly means that it should not be moved in any direction although it has to be kept relaxed.

Patanjali points out that the posture should be steady and pleasing so as to aid concentration. A right posture gives serenity of body. The body must be kept clean if the living image of God is to be installed in it.

His gaze should be fixed at the tip of his nose. If this is followed literally there is a possibility of the seeker getting headache, giddiness etc. Adi Sankara says that the term means that the meditator should have his attention as though turned towards the tip of his own nose. The meditator is advised not to look around so that his attention may not get distracted.

**prashaantaatmaa vigatabheer brahmachaarivrate sthitah  
manah samyamya macchitto yukta aaseeta matparah // 6.14 //**

*Serene minded, fearless, firm in the vow of Brahmacharya, having controlled the mind, thinking on Me and balanced, let him sit in yoga, having Me as the Supreme goal.*

The word Prashaanta means inward peace. This is the inner joy in which the meditator will find himself as a result of regular practice. Fear is the quality in a person who cannot believe that there is something beyond himself which is the Supreme.

The very process of turning towards the Supreme makes him afraid of nothingness. The seeker should therefore be fearless since it is the deadliest enemy for spiritual progress.

Even after the mind becomes peaceful and joyous and fearlessness achieved after a continuous practice of meditation and study of scriptures, no progress towards the goal can be possible unless the seeker gets established himself in perfect Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya implies the observance of celibacy as well as the practice of self control in all fields of sense-stimulations and sense-gratifications.

Without self control the mind will become chaotic due to the pressures of the world of objects. Unless the mind is provided with another target to concentrate upon it cannot

retreat from its usual pre-occupations with the external world. This alternative is the inner field of the Self.

When the body, mind and intellect are controlled through the above process, the seeker gains mental energy and experiences an increasing capacity to withdraw within himself and fix all his thoughts on `Me`, the Self. After taming the mind and stopping it from its external wanderings, it should be kept focused upon the Divine seeking nothing but the Supreme. The mind becomes still but not vacant for it is fixed on the Supreme. *Ishvara Pranidhana* is a recognized way in yoga discipline. They act in the world but the passionless tranquility of the spirit remains undisturbed. They are like lotus in the lake which is unruffled by the tide.

**yunjannevam sadaa'tmaanam yogee niyatamaanasah  
shaantim nirvaanaparamaam matsamsthaam adhigacchati // 6.15 //**

*Thus, always keeping the mind balanced, with his mind controlled, the Yogi attains to the peace abiding in Me - the peace that culminates in total liberation - Nirvana or Moksha.*

After explaining 1. The physical pose 2. Mental stability and 3. The consequent intellectual self-application, The Lord gives out the last step in the technique of meditation. When all the above stages of meditation have been gone through the seeker becomes an unwavering person in his physical and subtler existence. Such a person who constantly keeps his mind free from agitations surely reaches the Supreme. The word `constantly' does not mean at the cost of his duty to his home and the society. It means a consistent inner silence during meditation. At the peak of meditation the mind becomes completely `still' and comes to a `halt'.

The individual comes to experience an infinite peace when his mind is calmed. This is the peace that always resides in the seeker. Thus when there is no mental, intellectual and bodily disturbances and agitations, the seeker attains the peace unknown in the outside world that ultimately ends in the Supreme Liberation i.e. Nirvana-Paramam. In brief, the meditator awakens to his own status of Selfhood which is the fulfillment of the meditation.

MODERATION IS ESSENTIAL

**naatyashnatastu yogo'sti na chaikaantamanashnatah  
na chaati swapnasheelasya jaagrato naiva charjuna // 6.16 //**

*Verily, Yoga is not possible for him, who eats too much, or for him who does not eat at all; or for him who sleeps too much, or for him who is always awake, O Arjuna.*

The Lord gives guidelines in this verse and the following ones on the possible pitfalls that have to be guarded against in pursuit of meditation. The central theme of His guidance is that moderation in all activities at all levels is the precondition for achieving success in Meditation. Intemperateness in any field of behavior and activity brings about mental agitations which are not conducive to the development of an integrated personality.

Therefore moderation in food, sleep and recreation is directed.

Yoga is not possible for him who eats too much nor for him who does not eat at all. Eating means not only the process of consuming food but includes enjoyments gained through all means of sense perceptions and inward experiences. Similarly, neither too much sleep which erodes the faculties nor lack of sleep which disturbs the body rhythm is advised for spiritual life. Everything in moderation is the rule.

**yuktaahaaravihaarasya yuktacheshtasya karmasu  
yuktaswapnaavabodhasya yogo bhavati dukhahaa // 6.17 //**

*Yoga puts an end to all sorrows for him who is moderate in food and recreation, who is moderate in his exertion at work, who is moderate in sleep and wakefulness.*

Moderation but not complete self-denial in all activities of life like eating, recreation, sleep and exertion in working is the basic principle stated here. The important guideline in this verse is that the amount of effort put in for all work, including selfless divine work, should be moderate as otherwise such work instead of redeeming the seeker would enslave him. What is required is restraint but not abstinence. Yoga should be practiced because it is capable of destroying all miseries.

## Concepts and Issues

In this Chapter, Sri Krishna clears the doubt of Arjuna as to whether a Yogi and a Sanyasi are one and the same. The Lord says that everyone who wishes to become a Yogi or Sanyasi must perform his bounden duty. By performing one's duty without expectation of results one becomes a Yogi. By renouncing all worldly thoughts, by constantly remembering God, through study of scriptures, Japa, Kirtan and Meditation one becomes a Sanyasi.

He who controls his body, mind and senses can remain calm in pleasure and pain, heat and cold, honor and dishonor. For him there is no friend or enemy and he feels no difference between gold and stone. He is a perfected Yogi. He sees God in everything. Such a sage who is self-controlled and free from all desires constantly engages his mind in meditation.

Sri Krishna describes the pre-requisites for meditation and explains to Arjuna the method of its practice. After observing all the preliminaries, with serenity of mind, fearlessness and vow of continence, the meditator should think of The Lord's presence between the two eye-brows which is the point of concentration. Such a person will attain supreme peace or liberation.

The Lord advises that an aspirant should adopt moderation in all his daily activities like food, sleep and waking hours, yogic breathing and exercises, satsangs and svadhyaya etc.

## Live as the Gita Teaches You to Live

- Raise yourself by yourself.
- Know what meditation is and practice it regularly.
- Be moderate in everything you do.

### Points to Ponder

1. How one can keep his mind steady?
2. What are the pre-requisites for meditation?
3. How one's own self is his own friend and enemy?
4. Write short notes on the greatest among all types of Yogis.

**Next time we will proceed from the Verse 6.18**

*HARIH OM*

Bhagavad Gita: Chapter 6 (Part-2)  
Dhyaana Yogah: Yoga of Meditation  
**T.N.Sethumadhavan**

## Preamble

We have seen Sri Bhgavan describing the process of meditation. He continues the discussion in the following verses pointing out that the controlled mind remains peaceful and explaining the process by which the seeker can gain the experience of the Essential Self through such disciplined mind. By training the mind, one must give up its preoccupation with the world and direct it to the Self within and make it introvert. As soon as the mind tastes the bliss of the Self it will realize that there is no greater enjoyment. Being established therein, even the greatest of the sorrows in the world cannot disturb its equanimity and peace. One practices that Yoga (union with the Self) through complete control of the senses and the thought flow which are the source-point of all desires. This sets the stage for practicing meditation and the realization of the Self.

The mind in the state of meditation thinks of the Self. The intellect holds the mind single pointedly upon the Self without allowing it to slip into any other thought. Whenever the mind wanders away the intellect brings it back through supervision and control. By maintaining single pointed thought of the Self, the mind becomes absolutely tranquil and quiet. The Jnani then experiences the infinite bliss of Brahman. Thereafter, he sees the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self. He sees the Supreme Being everywhere.

When he heard the exposition on how to discipline and control the mind, Arjuna raises a doubt as to whether the mind is such a thing which can be controlled at all. He wonders how the mind, a restless, turbulent, strong and obstinate entity, can be brought under control. And even if forcefully brought under control, how can the mind continue to remain steady and calm? Krishna assures Arjuna that the intellect can control the mind through sustained practice and dispassion.

Arjuna wonders as to what will happen to a seeker and his efforts if he fails to attain Self-realization in his lifetime. Will he not be denied the benefits of both the material and spiritual worlds? Krishna allays Arjuna's logical and natural concern and assures him that no seeker falling short of Realization in his life time will ever suffer either here or hereafter. Such a person will gain a heavenly bliss and reincarnate in a pure and pious home or in a family of wise yogis, which will provide him with an ideal environment for pursuing spiritual goal of Realization in his new life. Therefore, Krishna advises Arjuna to practice yoga with devotion and determination until he merges with the Supreme Brahman.

## The Text

WHO IS A YOGI

**yadaa viniyatam chittamaatmanyevavatishthate  
nihsprihak sarvakaamebhyo yukta ityuchyate tadaa // 6.18 //**

*When the well-controlled mind rests in the Self alone, free from longing for objects of desires, then one is said to have attained yoga.*

When the mind is completely under control it rests peacefully in the Self alone. Uncontrolled mind is the one which wanders in search of satisfaction among the sense objects. To make the mind withdraw from its nomadic nature for contemplating continuously on the Self, which is the substratum that illumines all perceptions and experiences, one has to make it free from desires. While desires by themselves are not unhealthy, Gita advises us to renounce our cravings for all objects of desires seen or unseen, belonging to this world or the next.

When the mind is withdrawn from sense objects, it becomes capable of contemplating on the Self as it is free from agitations. The finite and limited sense objects disturb the mind, while the unlimited and infinite Self brings peace and joy to it. This condition of replacing sense oriented thoughts with contemplation on the Self is called steadfastness. The steadfast mind of a Yogi is described in the next verse.

**yathaa deepo nivaatastho nengate sopamaa smritaa  
yogino yatachittasya yunjato yogamaatmanah // 6.19 //**

*“Like a lamp kept in a windless place which does not flicker” - that is the figure (used by the wise) for the disciplined mind of a yogi practicing concentration on the Self.*

Mind is as unstable as a flickering flame of a lamp. But when the same mind is made to concentrate in the Self by the meditator its vacillations and wanderings are stopped. It becomes brilliant just as a flickering lamp when placed in a windless spot.

**yatroparamate chittam niruddham yogasevayaa  
yatra chaivaatmanaatmaanam pashyannaatmani tushyati // 6.20 //**

*When the mind, restrained by the practice of yoga, attains quietitude and when seeing the Self by the self, he is rejoiced in his own Self.*

**sukhamaatyantikam yattad buddhi graahyamateendriyam  
vetti yatra na chaivaayam sthitashchalati tattwatah // 6.21 //**

*When he (the Yogi) feels that Infinite bliss - which can be grasped by the (pure) intellect and which transcends the senses, wherein established, he never moves from the Reality.*

**yam labdhwaa chaaparam laabham manyate naadhikam tatah  
yasminsthito na duhkkena gurunaapi vichaalyate // 6.22 //**

*Which having obtained, he thinks there is no other gain superior to it; wherein established, he is not moved even by the heaviest of sorrows -*



**tam vidyaad dukkhasamyogaviyogam yogasamjnitam  
sa nishchayena yuktavyo yogo'nirvinna chetasaa // 6.23 //**

*Let that be known as Yoga which is severance from the contact of pain. This yoga should be practiced with perseverance and with an undaunted mind.*

All these four Verses (20 - 23) should be taken together which give a complete picture of Yoga and explain the stages that a Yogi passes through whose mind has become single pointed by meditation. They end with a call given by The Lord to all mankind to practice this Yoga of Meditation and self development.

The goal of the meditator is attaining serene quietitude when his mind becomes completely restrained and gains an experience of the Self, not as an entity separate from himself but as his own true nature. This self discovery of the mind is nothing other than the process by which ego's identification with body, mind and intellect is replaced by the principle of Divine Consciousness. The experience of the self is an enduring state from which there is no return.

Sri Krishna says that having gained this Infinite Bliss, no one can come to the worldly sorrows and feel the urge to go after the worldly objects and pursuits. The Yogi who attained the state of Supreme Truth will consider no other gain as equal to it and worth comparable. Thus Sri Krishna defines Yoga as a state of “*DISUNION FROM EVERY UNION WITH PAIN*”.

The term yoga means contact. Man is always in contact with finite worldly objects through the instruments of body, mind and intellect and gets finite joy only. When this temporary joy ends on account of the cessation of the instrumentality of the senses, sorrow begins. Therefore it is said that life through these matter instruments is called the life of union-with-pain.

Detachment from this union is the process in which we disassociate ourselves from the fields of objects and their experiences. As mind cannot exist without any attachment, once it is detached from the unreal and pain giving world of objects, it has to get itself attached to the Real and Permanent Bliss, which is called meditation. In deep meditation, the senses do not function; they are resolved into their cause i.e. the mind. And when the mind becomes steady and cognition alone functions, then the indescribable Self is realized.

Thus Yoga is nothing but a man's renunciation of contacts with sorrows and turning towards Bliss which is his real nature. Sri Krishna says that this Yoga is to be practiced with an eager and decisive mind. Success in meditation is possible only when it is carried out with firm conviction, perseverance and an un-despairing heart as the Yoga or connection with the Real can be gained only with Viyoga or disconnection from the Unreal. There should be no relaxation of effort even though there is no quick result and the practice appears difficult. If living among the finite objects with its limited joys is sorrow, then to get away from it all is to enter the realm of Bliss which is the Self. This is Yoga.

Patanjali Yoga Sutras declare that the root of sorrow in the form of repeated births and deaths lies in the contact between the subject and the object or in the liaison due to ignorance between the soul and the objective world. With the termination of this contact, sorrows and sufferings also come to an end for all time.

Patanjali says “The great sorrow in the form of future births and deaths is called ‘Heya’- that which ought to be avoided (2.16). The cause of ‘Heya’ or suffering is the contact between the subject and the object (2.17). Ignorance is the root of that contact (2.24). The termination of that contact between the subject and the object through the eradication of the ignorance is known as ‘Hana’ - shutting out the ‘Heya’. This represents the aloofness of the subject - Kaivalya (2.25)

This state of God realization is termed ‘Yoga’ in the Gita. Further instructions on yoga are continued in the following verses.

**sankalpaprabhavaan kaamaanstyaktwaa sarvaan asheshatah  
manasaivendriyagraamam viniyamyaa samantatah // 6.24 //**

*Abandoning without reserve all desires born of Sankalpa and completely restraining the whole group of senses by the mind from all sides...*

**shanaih shanairupamed buddhyaah dhrigriheetayaa  
aatmasamstham manah kritwaa na kinchidapi chintayet // 6.25 //**

*Little by little let him attain quietitude by the intellect held in firmness; having made the mind established in the Self, let him not think of anything.*

The goal of Yoga was to accomplish that state wherein the mind, through the practice of concentration, comes to get it absolutely restrained and achieves perfection or bliss. The way of attaining single pointedness of mind, what the single pointed mind should then do, how to approach and ultimately realize the Truth have all been exhaustively dealt with here. The various stages to be undergone in this regard are:

Renounce all desires fully by controlling the mind and restrain all the sense organs from their fields of sense objects. This mind-quietening process cannot be achieved at one go. It is clearly advised that mind should achieve quietitude as a result of withdrawal from sense objects by degrees - slowly and slowly.

Thereafter, patiently, the mind should be made to contemplate on the Self with the aid of the intellect. A mind that continuously contemplates on the Self becomes still and gets pervaded by the divine quietitude. This is the last stage of the journey that conscious and deliberate action can take any seeker.

Sri Krishna warns that the meditator after reaching the last stage of inner peace should not think of anything else. Undisturbed by any new thought waves he should maintain inner silence and come to live it more and more deeply.

**yato yato nishcharati manashchanchalamasthiram  
tatastato niyamyai tadaatmanyeva vasham nayet // 6.26 //**

*From whatever cause the restless and the unsteady mind wanders away, from that let him restrain it and bring it back to be under the control of the Self alone.*

Mind by its very nature is unsteady and restless; it always wanders away from the point of concentration. The true seeker on the path of meditation will therefore get despaired at his inability to fix his mind on a focal point, contemplating on the Self. During the practice of meditation although the sense organs are controlled, the chasing of the sense objects by the mind will continue and cause dejection in the seeker.

The reasons for this roving mind may be many such as memories of the past, proximity of the tempting sense objects, attachments etc. Sri Krishna directs that whatever be the reason for the restlessness of the mind, the seeker is not to lose hope. On the contrary he should understand that these tendencies are the very characteristics of the mind and the process of meditation is the technique to eliminate them.

The means of bringing under control the restless mind are the realization of the illusoriness of sense-objects and the cultivation of indifference to them. Through practice of discrimination and detachment the mind gradually attains inner peace.

The Lord advises the seeker to bring back the mind that has gone out on a roaming mission. As soon as the mind is withdrawn through will power it will go out again because mind means flow of thoughts and it can never be steady without any motion. Therefore in the meditation when the mind is withdrawn from the sense objects it should be provided with an alternative to keep it busy. That alternative is its application towards contemplating on the Self alone.

RESULT OF THE YOGA OF MEDITATION

**prashaantamanasam hyenam yoginam sukhamuttamam  
upaiti shaantarajasam brahmabhootamakalmasham // 6.27 //**

*Supreme bliss verily comes to this yogi whose mind is completely tranquil, whose passions are quietened, who is free from sin and has become one with Brahman.*

**yunjannevam sadaa'tmaanam yogee vigatakalmashah  
sukhena brahmasamsparsam atyantam sukham ashnute // 6.28 //**

*The yogi always engaging the mind thus (in the practice of yoga) freed from sins easily enjoys the Infinite Bliss of contact with Brahman.*

In these two verses the Lord describes the benefits of Yoga. During meditation when the mind is withdrawn from the world of objects and is concentrated on the Self, it acquires quietitude and the thought flow ceases. Where there is no thought flow there is no mind.

Where the mind has ended, there the seeker experiences the Infinite nature of the Self and the meditator reaches to the Supreme Bliss by ending all his mental agitations.

The ego discovers that it is none other than the Self and hence there is no dualism at this stage. Such a man of self-realization himself becomes Brahman. The meditator (*Upasaka*) becomes one with the object of meditation (*Upasya*).

A meditator step by step grows out of his own ignorance and imperfection represented by his ego and merges with the Supreme. He loses contact with the objects of the senses and comes into contact with the Self within - Brahman. This means that the seeker becomes Brahman and comes to experience the Infinite Bliss as against contact with the world of objects (‘not-Self’) whose joys are always finite. He becomes a *Jivanmukta*, liberated while living in a body.

Chandogya Upanishad (VII-xxiii.I) says “That which is infinite or great beyond all, is true happiness. There is no joy in that which is finite. Happiness lies in infinity. Efforts should be made in particular to know the Infinite alone”. It continues “The Infinite represents that plane of consciousness in which no other is cognized and the state in which another is seen, another is heard and another is cognized represents the finite. That which is infinite is immortal. That which is finite is mortal”. (VII-xxiv.I)

PURPOSE OF YOGA IS ACHIEVED

**sarvabhootasthamaatmaanam sarvabhotani chaatmani  
eekshate yogayuktaatma sarvatra samadarshanah // 6.29 //**

*With the mind harmonized by Yoga he sees the Self abiding in all beings and all beings in the Self; he sees the same everywhere.*

That the perfect man of Self-knowledge or God-Realization is not merely the one who realized his own divinity but is also one who has equally understood and has come to live in the knowledge of divinity inherent in all creatures without any distinction. He sees the same spirit dwelling in all objects. He sees the identity of Atman, the inmost reality of himself, and Brahman, the inmost reality of the universe.

The essence in all names and forms is the same Self which is the substratum in the world of objects just like the clay in all the pots, gold in all the ornaments, ocean in all the waves and electricity in all the gadgets. The Yogi observes oneness or unity of the Self everywhere.

Isa Upanishad says “But he who sees all beings in the Self and the self in all beings, no longer hates anyone”. (6)

**yo maam pashyati sarvatra sarvam cha mayi pashyati  
tasyaaham na pranashyaami sa cha me na pranashyati // 6.30 //**

*He who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, never gets separated from Me (by time, space or anything intervening) nor do I get separated from him.*

Here the words `I' and `Me" mean the Self. On rediscovering the Self the ego becomes the Self and there is no distinction between the ego and the Self just as the dreamer becomes the waker and the waker is not separate from the dreamer. When we are one with the Divine in us, we become one with the whole stream of life.

**sarvabhootasthitam yo maam bhajatyekatwamaasthitah  
sarvathaa vartamaano pi sa yogee mayivartate // 6.31 //**

*He who, being established in oneness, worships Me, who dwells in all beings - that Yogi, in whatever way leads his life, lives in Me.*

The Lord dwells in all beings as their inmost Self irrespective of their forms. The Yogi who sees the Lord in all beings and worships him through all beings has attained liberation. No matter how he lives and acts, he is always free. He is no longer under the control of scriptural injunctions.

**aatmaupamyena sarvatra samam pashyati yo'rjuna  
sukham vaa yadi vaa dukkham sa yogee paramo matah // 6.32 //**

*I hold him to be a supreme yogi, O Arjuna, who looks on the pleasure and pain of all beings as he looks upon them in himself.*

This verse is the golden rule of Hinduism. The highest yogi sees that whatever is pleasant to him is pleasant to all others, including subhuman beings and that whatever is painful to him is painful to all others. Therefore he cannot cause pain to any. He leads a life of complete non-violence. The true Yogi is one who feels the pains and joys of others as if they were his own. He feels the entire universe as his own form.

CONTROL OF MIND IS DIFFICULT BUT POSSIBLE

**arjuna uvaacha  
yo'yam yogastwayaa proktah saamyena madhusoodana  
etasyaaham na pashyaami chanchalatwaat stithim sthiraam // 6.33 //**

*Arjuna said*

*This Yoga of equanimity, taught by You, O slayer of Madusudana (Krishna), I do not see how it can long endure, because of the restlessness of the mind.*

Perfect equanimity, a mind free from torpidity and restlessness, in all circumstances, conditions and challenges of life seemed an uphill task and impracticable to Arjuna. He says that achieving evenness of mind is day dreaming because the human mind, by its very nature, is restless in its own excitements.

**chanchalam hi manah krishna pramaathi balavad dridham  
tasyaaham nigraham manye vaayor iva sudushkaram // 6.34 //**

*The mind verily is restless, turbulent, powerful and unyielding, O Krishna; it seems to me, to control it is as hard as to control the wind.*

Arjuna argues that the mind is without doubt restless, turbulent, strong and unyielding and is as difficult to control it as the wind.

The characteristics of the mind described in this verse are:

- Restless - Because the mind constantly changes its focus from one object to another.
- Turbulent - Because of the speed in the flow of thoughts and consequent agitations it creates in the body and the senses by bringing them under the control of the sense objects.
- Strong - Because once it gets attached to any sense object, it gains strength in the same attachment and sticks to that object despite logical reasoning to the contrary.
- Unyielding - Because of the impossibility of an individual to pull it back from its fasting journey into the world of sense objects and to make it steady on a predetermined focus.

**sri bhagavaan uvaacha  
asamshayam mahaabaaho mano durnigraham chalam  
abhyaasena tu kaunteya vairaagyena cha grihyate // 6.35 //**

*Sri Bhagavan said*

*Undoubtedly, O Mighty Armed, the mind is difficult to control and restless, but, by practice and detachment, O Son of Kunti, it is restrained.*

Sri Krishna agrees that mind is unsteady and restless and therefore difficult to control and that the goal cannot be easily reached. But through practice and detachment mind can be brought under control.

Practice is the effort of the mind towards calmness. Practice becomes firmly grounded when it is followed for a long time and unremittingly with devotion. The end is easily achieved with the help of austerity, continence, discrimination and faith. The aspirant must not lose courage in the face of repeated failures.

Detachment is freedom from thirst for any pleasure seen or heard of. It is acquired through a constant perception of evil in sensuous happiness, either of this life or hereafter.

Patanjali Yoga Sutra 1.12 says “*abhyasavairagyabhyam tan nirodhaha*” meaning that the restless mind, accustomed to act on impulse, can be controlled only by non-attachment and practice. Of these two methods, the attempt to make the mind steady is called practice. (Sutra 1.13)

Bhagavatam explains non-attachment (vairagya) as “When there is earth to lie upon, why trouble about bed? When one’s arm is readily available, why need pillows? When there is the palm of one’s hand, why seek for plates and utensils? When there is the atmosphere, the bark of trees etc., what need is there of silks?”

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Yoga Sutra (1.16) says “Supreme or the highest form of dispassion represents absence of thirst for all the three Gunas or modes of Prakriti. It is attained through the Knowledge of Purusha or Spirit, who is altogether different from Prakriti.”

**asamyataatmanaa yogo dushpraapa iti me matih  
vashyaatmanaa tu yatataa shakyo'vaaptumupaayatah // 6.36 //**

*Yoga, I think, is hard to attain by one who is not self-controlled but by the self-controlled it is attainable through proper means.*

An uncontrolled mind cannot progress in spiritual path unless it discovers the Self. The discovery of the Self is possible by self-control achieved through the withdrawal of sense organs from their respective objects. Yoga can be attained by striving hard to utilize the conserved energies for the Divine purposes.

Yoga is the science of religion. The test of its validity lies in one’s seeing results through actual experimentation. Hence the teachers of yoga emphasize self-control and other disciplines.

**arjuna uvaacha  
ayatih shraddhayopeto yogaacchalitamaanasah  
apraapya yogasamsiddhim kaam gatim krishna gacchati // 6.37 //**

*Arjuna said*

*He who is endowed with faith, but not with self-control, and whose mind wanders away from Yoga - to what end does he go, O Krishna, having failed to attain perfection in Yoga?*

This verse relates to a seeker who has faith in the efficacy of Yoga but who is unable to control the senses and the mind. Arjuna asks what happens to such a person for he may lose both the joys of the sense objects and the Absolute Bliss hereafter. The word Sraddha does not mean blind faith but an intellectual understanding of the deeper significance of what the teachers teach and scriptures declare.

**kacchinnobhayavibhrashtash chhinnaabhramiva nashyati  
apratishtho mahaabaaho vimoodho brahmanah pathi // 6.38 //**

*Fallen from both, does he not, O Mighty Armed, perish like a rent cloud, supportless and deluded in the path of Brahman?*

Arjuna wonders as to what will happen to the seeker who though full of faith but for want of mental restraint fails to achieve success having fallen from both. Fallen from both means achieving no success in the path of worldly success as also in the path of Yoga.

Rent cloud is that very small portion of the large cloud which gets detached from the latter on account of heavy winds and as a consequence moves about without any set direction hit by every passing breeze. Arjuna enquires whether such unsuccessful seekers will meander about the universe as the rented clouds and get lost.

**etanme samshayam krishna chhettumarhasyasheshatah  
twadanyah samshayasyaasya chhettaa na hyupapadyate // 6.39 //**

*O Krishna, please dispel this doubt of mine completely for, it is not possible for anyone but you to dispel this doubt.*

CLARIFICATION REGARDING PARTIAL SPIRITUAL EFFORTS

**sri bhagavaan uvaacha  
paartha naiveha naamutra vinaashastasya vidyate  
nahi kalyaankrit kaschid durgatim taatagacchati // 6.40 //**

*Sri Bhagavan said*

*O Partha, there is no destruction for him either in this world, or in the next world; none verily, who does good, O My Son, ever comes to grief.*

In the following five verses Sri Krishna elucidates the path of progress of a seeker whose spiritual endeavors have not been met with any success either on account of death or due to any other temptation. The Lord assures him that he who does not achieve perfection in Yoga in this birth will not be destroyed either in this world or in the next. No destruction means that surely he will not take a birth lower than the present one in his next life. Doing good means striving for Self-realization.

WHAT HAPPENS TO HIM IS AS FOLLOWS.

**praapya punyakritaam lokaanushitwaa shaashwateeh samaah  
shucheenaam shreemataaam gehe yogabhrashto'bhijaayate // 6.41 //**

*He who has fallen from Yoga goes to the world of the righteous and having lived there for long years, he is born again in the house of the pure and the prosperous.*

The Lord says that the one who was not able to attain perfection in Yoga or the one who achieved some progress in Yoga but had fallen due to lack of dispassion or on account of turbulent senses, attains the worlds inhabited by those pious souls who performed great religious sacrifices while living on this earth. Having lived there as long as the merit of his past spiritual life lasts he is born again in the house of those whose conduct is governed by religion where he can continue his spiritual journey from the point where he had left in the previous birth.



**athavaa yoginaameva kule bhavati dheemataam  
etaddhi durlabhataram loke janma yadeedrisham // 6.42 //**

*Or he is born in a family of yogis rich in wisdom; verily such a birth is very difficult to obtain in this world.*

Sri Krishna says that those who are possessed of genuine dispassion but yet fail to achieve success in Yoga are born in the family of enlightened yogis poor in resources but rich in wisdom. A birth in such families is rare to obtain than the one mentioned in the preceding verse. It is rare because he is placed right from the beginning of his life in an environment which is conducive for the practice of Yoga so that he could start his spiritual journey from a very early stage. Considering the greatness of the illumined souls, a birth in their families is stated to be very difficult to obtain.

Mundaka Upanishad (III-ii-9) says “In the family of a Knower of Brahman, none remains ignorant of Brahman. Transcending both grief and sin, and freed from the knot of ignorance in the heart, the member of such a family becomes immortal, i.e. attains freedom for all time from birth and death”.

**tatra tam buddhisamyogam labhate paurvadehikam  
yatate cha tato bhooyah samsiddhau kurunandana // 6.43 //**

*There he comes in touch with the knowledge acquired in his former body and strives more than before for perfection, O Son of the Kurus.*

When he takes a human body again in this world, his previous efforts and practice of Yoga do not go in vain. They bear fruit in this birth and hasten his moral and spiritual evolution. Our thoughts, actions and experiences are left in our subconscious mind in the form of subtle impressions. These impressions of the present and the past births will be re-energized in the next birth. The impressions of the yogic tendencies will compel the seeker to work with greater vigor than in his former birth. Whatever progress a man makes in the path of yoga he retains. He again starts from there when the next opportunity arises.

**poorvaabhyaasena tenaiva hriyate hyavasho'pi sah  
jijnaasurapi yogasya shabdabrahmaativartate // 6.44 //**

*By that former practice alone he is borne on in spite of himself. Even he who merely wishes to know Yoga goes beyond the world of Vedic rites.*

The man who had failed in yoga is carried to the goal, which he intended to reach in the previous birth, by the force of impressions of his past yogic practices, though he may not be aware of it. If he had not done that many evil deeds as to overcome his yogic tendencies, he will certainly continue his yogic practices in this birth with great vigor by force of the impressions of the previous birth.

If the force of evil actions is very strong, the yogic tendencies would be overpowered or suppressed by them temporarily. As soon as the fruits of evil actions are exhausted the yogic vasanas will again manifest themselves and he will eventually attain the final realization.

Sri Krishna says even a man of enquiry in whom a desire to know about Yoga goes beyond the Brahmic word i.e. beyond Vedas. He raises superior to the Vedic rituals and ceremonies. He is not satisfied with mere ritualism and yearns for a higher fulfillment. If this is the case of an aspirant without any spiritual inclinations of the previous birth, how much more exalted will be the state of a seeker who takes up the practice of Yoga in this birth after having fallen from that path in his previous birth?

What the Lord implies is that no effort in the practice of yoga goes waste. Even the least effort bears fruit either in this birth or in another and there is no cause for any disappointment for any one including the dullest seeker.

**prayatnaadyatamaanastu yogee samshuddhakilbishah  
aneka janma samsiddhastato yaati paraam gatim // 6.45 //**

*But the Yogi, who strives diligently, purified from sins and perfected through many births, attains the Supreme Goal.*

Mind and intellect of an individual function through the body in the world outside as per the qualities they assume because of the actions performed in their earlier births. The wrong and negative qualities of the mind and intellect are sins in the language of Vedanta. After purifying the mind from these sins the aspirant practices meditation and ultimately the mind becomes devoid of impressions which is called the end of the mind since the mind is nothing but a flow of thoughts.

When there is no thought, there is no mind and where there is no mind there is no ego which is termed as 'reaching the highest goal' or Self-Rediscovery. Little by little acquiring, through many births, the knowledge of Reality, he ultimately attains perfection. The Gita gives us hopeful belief in the redemption of all.

Although this theory is explained here in one or two sentences, in actual implementation, it is an achievement of many life times - 'many births' as The Lord puts it.

THE PERFECT YOGI

**tapaswibhyo'dhiko yogee jnaanibhyo'pi mato'dhikah  
karmibhyashchaadhiko yogee tasmaad yogee bhavaarjuna // 6.46 //**

*The Yogi is thought to be superior to the ascetics and even superior to men of Knowledge (obtained merely through the study of scriptures); he is also superior to men of action; therefore, you strive to be a Yogi, O Arjuna .*

Sri Krishna brings out here that meditation is more important than various other practices in the matter of Spiritual Development. He says that the meditator is nobler than the Tapaswi, the one who observes austerities of the body and physical self-denials. The meditator is nobler than the Gnani also who deeply studies the scriptures and acquires their knowledge. The meditator is nobler than Karmis who undertake actions like sacrifices and other rituals enjoined in the Vedas as also charitable activities for obtaining rewards.

Through austerities, study, Vedic rituals, and philanthropic action, one attains purity of heart and then follows the path of Self-Knowledge. But the practice of yoga which is said to be superior to jnana, tapas and karma has the best of all the three and includes devotion. Yoga or union with God which is attained through Bhakti is superior because it enables one to arrive directly at the Supreme Goal. Arjuna is therefore advised to strive to be a yogi. Jnana here means scriptural learning and not spiritual realization.

**yoginaamapi sarveshaam madgatenaantaraatmanaa  
shraddhaavaan bhajate yo maam sa me yuktatamo matah // 6.47 //**

*And among all the yogis, the one who worships Me with faith, his inmost self abiding in Me, I hold him to be the most closely united with Me in Yoga.*

It has been told earlier that meditation is the best among all the paths of spirituality. Meditation is a deliberate act by which the seeker strives to keep his thoughts channelized into one pre-determined line of thinking by not allowing the mind to entertain any other thoughts. It is therefore an attempt to fix the mind upon some object of contemplation.

According to the chosen nature of the object of contemplation and the method of controlling the mind from its wanderings, the art of meditation is classified as meditation upon a symbol, on a god-principle with a form, on the teacher, on the Kundalini, on any of the Great Elements or on a chosen text in the scriptures. Accordingly, the practitioners may be considered as followers of different kinds of meditation.

Yoga or union with the God which is attained through Bhakti is the highest goal. It also means the science of concentration and stilling of the modes of the mind. After giving a long account of the yoga discipline, the obstacles to be overcome, the Lord concludes that the greatest among the yogins is the devotee or the Bhakta.

This verse, following the praise of yoga, tells that devotion to God which makes one to cling to The Lord in utter faith and self-surrender makes yoga all the more exalted.

Gita stresses the importance of love of God or Ishwara and devotion to Him which make spiritual discipline complete. It emphasizes the path of Bhakti (devotion) as the easiest and best form of Yoga.

**om tat sat iti srimad bhagavadgeetaasu upanishatsu brahma vidyaayaam  
yogashaastre sri krishnaarjuna samvaade dhyaanayogo naama shashthodhyaayah //**

Thus in the Upanishads of the glorious Bhagavad Gita, the science of the Eternal, the scripture of Yoga, the dialogue between Sri Krishna and Arjuna, ends the sixth discourse entitled The Yoga of Meditation

## Concepts and Issues

Entitled 'The Yoga of Meditation', this chapter of the Bhagavad Gita elucidates meditation as the final gateway to Self-realization. Krishna begins with the definition of a sannyasi, a renounced person. Renunciation is not giving up enjoyments, abandoning one's duties and escaping to a safe sanctuary. It is this misunderstanding that has turned away genuine seekers and prevented them from accessing the benefits of renunciation. Krishna describes a sannyasi as one who does what one ought to do, fulfils one's duties and responsibilities fully, without depending on the fruit of action.

A sannyasi is not one without a higher ideal, nor is he an inactive person. Krishna describes the three stages of spiritual evolution, from an active yogi to a meditative sannyasi and, finally, to the exalted state of a jnani, the enlightened One.

A sannyasi has offloaded the bulk of his desires and is in contemplation of the higher. He is fit for meditation and embarks on the path of deep reflection and focus on reality. A jnani has reached the exalted state of enlightenment. Krishna describes the three stages in terms of mental states rather than external appearances.

Step by step, Krishna takes us through the preparatory disciplines as well as disqualifications for meditation. One must have a balanced contact with the world – neither too much nor too little. Every activity must be carefully supervised by the intellect so that no desire interrupts the subtle practice of meditation.

Krishna then gives the test of enlightenment. A realized soul is one who feels one with everyone. He sees his Self as the Self in all beings. In the end he worships God not in a temple, but in every living being. Thereafter, he lives in Atman, whatever his lifestyle. It is to be understood that declaring love for God has no meaning when we cannot connect with His images around us.

On hearing the glory of the qualities of equanimity of mind and equal vision Arjuna wants to know how the powerful turbulence of mind can be got over. Sri Krishna says that mind can be controlled by dispassion and practice.

Whenever the mind, due to its previous habits, strays away from the object of meditation, it should be repeatedly brought back on the object of concentration with effort. By such constant practice of meditation the meditator and the object of meditation will become one and then he will enjoy the supreme Bliss. The Yogi whose mind is thus harmonized will see the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self. He never becomes separate from The Lord nor does The Lord become separated from him. The perfected saint acts as an instrument in the hands of God. The key words are *vairagya*, dispassion and *abhyasa*, practice.

The mind must be made to rest in God like a lamp placed in a windless room. When the mind is restrained by the practice of meditation, it realizes the Self within. It experiences such Bliss as if there is nothing else in the three worlds worth possessing. Even the bitterest of the sorrows will not disturb such a mind. One should practice Sadhana with determination to enjoy that supreme joy.

In this Chapter Sri Krishna teaches that meditation is the only means to attain God-consciousness in all stages of human evolution and that attaining such consciousness is the purpose of all Yogas. In all the methods of spiritual practices (Yoga) the mind alone plays an important role.

When the mind is directed towards God, with a comprehensive understanding, one's perception, attitude and desires for the world change automatically. On realizing the Self even the taste for the sense-objects ceases. Thus by experiencing the God-consciousness through continuous meditation one perceives the Unity in Diversity when all the desires come to an end.

Arjuna, like us, is afraid of leaving the safe confines of his present existence to discover the unknown realm of the Infinite. He asks Krishna what would be the fate of those who commit themselves to a spiritual life but die before realization. Krishna gives a fitting reply to reveal one of the most insightful laws of life. He says, "One who is righteous will never come to grief – either now or in the future. His efforts will not go in vain. He will carry forward the credits to his future life".

A spiritually evolved person who falls short of realization will either be born in the family of the pious and the pure or Yogis. There, endowed with the wisdom acquired in previous lives, he will strive even more to attain enlightenment. Thus the diligent seeker effortlessly reaches Brahman.

## Live as the Gita Teaches You to Live

Meditation is the highest spiritual technique that needs to be practiced diligently and devotedly by qualified practitioners. The essential prerequisite is a calm mind. A mind burdened with desires and attachments is unable to take off into subtler realms of concentration and meditation.

Yoga brings about a disciplined mind. This can be brought about by curtailing the outgoing tendencies of the mind. It leads to bliss. Once the state of bliss is reached, all other worldly matters lose their influence over the body and mind. Such a man will feel his oneness with God. He will experience unity in diversity. Any effort towards meditation is not wasted and it will have its benefits in the future births also.

### Points to Ponder

- State of thoroughly disciplined mind
- State of the one who realized God
- Process of meditation

- Withdrawing and controlling the mind from its wanderings
- The greatest among all types of Yogis
- Seeing the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self

**Next time we will take up Chapter 7**

*HARIH OM*