

Baghawat Geeta, Class 99: Chapter 6 Summary

Greetings All,

Continuing his teaching of the Gita, Swami Paramarthananda summarized chapter six. It deals with one of the most important topics of spirituality, namely meditation. This chapter is also very important as in the entire body of scriptures it is the only one that has dealt with meditation so extensively. Meditation has two roles to play.

- Meditation to be performed before Vedantic Sravanam. This is an upasana to prepare the mind for Sravanam. It includes a variety of saguna ishwara dhyanam. This upasana will lead to self-knowledge through Guru Upadesha.

Suppose a person has not performed this preparatory upsana? His mind is not considered qualified enough to receive the teaching, when he performs sravanam. In such a person while he will receive the knowledge, it will not assimilate within him. It will be like oil and water, each standing separately. What that person knows and what he is will be different. If it is an unprepared mind gyana-nishta does not occur. For such cases Nidhi dhyasanam or Vedantic meditation is a compulsory requirement.

- Nidhidhyasanam is nirguna ishwara dhyanam. It is also known as atma dhyanam. Let us remember that Upasana is saguna ishwara dhyanam.

In Vedantic meditation; a person dwells upon the teaching received during sravanam; and this dwelling is done for a length of time; so that the knowledge enters my mind; enters my sub-conscious personality. In short, it irrigates my whole personality so that I and the knowledge have become one; and

thus Vedantic meditation does not produce knowledge but Vedantic meditation helps in the assimilation of knowledge; it is not the cause of Gyanam; but it is cause of Gyana nishta.

Thus we can summarize the process as follows:

Upasana: Is for obtaining gyana yogyata.

Gyanam: Is to obtain Gyanam.

Nidhidhyasanam : Is to obtain Gyana Nishta.

The word dhyana is used in all three instances, such as upasana dhyanam.

What is the topic of chapter six? Is it upsana or nidhidhyasana dhyanam? Chapter six is focused only on Vedantic meditation or Nidhidhyasana dhyanam. Why does Sri Krishna introduce Vedantic meditation here?

Because, Sri Krishna feels, Arjuna has already done sravanam in chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 so this chapter is for assimilation of the teaching.

There are six parts to chapter six. They are:

- Bahiranga sadhanani, general disciplines to be followed daily.
- Antaranga sadhanani: Specific disciplines to be followed just before meditation.
- Dhyana Swaroopam: Actual process of meditation.
- Dhyana Phalam.
- Dhyana Pratibhanda Pariharau; remedies to obstacles to meditation.
- Yoga Bhrashta: Sri Krishna answers a pessimistic question of Arjuna.

Detailing each one of them:

- Bahiranga sadhanani: (Shloka 1-9, 16 and 17).

The general disciplines to be followed daily include: a) Practice karma yoga; it is very important. A karmi cannot practice meditation.

Sri Krishna says a karma yogi is one who is able to accept all the actions that he has to do in life without grumbling. One source of mental disturbance is doing things without loving that job; when I keep on doing things; without having a love for that; there is a split in my personality; mind does not want to do it; body has to do it; therefore there is a stress and strain.

Karma Yogi accepts and performs all actions without love or hate for the action.

He performs all actions with Ishwararpana budhi. He also accepts all fruits with Prasada Bhavana. Thus he has a stress free mind. It is a mind without conflict. It is a mind of samatvam. In such a mind there is no violent reaction. Therefore Karma yoga is a must for a dhyana yogi. Sri Krishna says such a man is as good as a Sanyasi.

Have self-confidence. Never look down upon yourself. Even if you feel you don't have any qualifications, remember that you are a part of the divine. If you feel diffident, surrender to God. God, Guru and Shashtra will help you.

Do not be fatalistic; fatalism is un-vedantic. We think karma theory is fatalism; this is the biggest misconception. Nowhere in the Vedas, fatalism is talked about; it always says, take charge of your life.

1. Practice self-control. When you use an instrument you should have control. Sri Krishna says God has given us this body with all the indriyas. All of them will help, if you control them. Make sure that they do not control you.
2. Practice moderation in everything. Don't indulge too much. Sense pleasures are allowed but don't over do it.

Check yourself once in a while by saying “no” to something you like. If there is a protest it means it is getting hold of you.

3. Antaranga sadhanani: (shlokas 10-15). These are specific disciplines to be practiced before a meditation. Eight disciplines are mentioned. They are:

1. Place of meditation should be clean, secluded and spiritual.
2. Time should be satvik. Early morning or evening hours are acceptable. The time of meditation should not be one, when you are rajasic or tamasic.
3. Proper seat to sit upon. Shastras don't recommend sitting on the floor.
4. Condition of body. It should be straight but not stiff.
5. Condition of sense organs. They should be withdrawn. Eyes partially closed focusing on nose or between eyebrows.
6. Breathing should be smooth and slow. Breath and mind are connected.
7. Condition of mind, one should become a mental Sanyasi for the duration of meditation. Drop all relationships such as husband, wife, child, son etc. Drop all roles. Just be a bhakta or shishya during meditation.
8. Condition of intellect or budhi: I must be convinced of the value of meditation. I must have conviction in meditation. I must be convinced that it will transform my personality.

These are the eight factors to be taken care of before meditation.

Dhyana Swaroopam: Shlokas 18-32. Dhyana swaroopam is the process of meditation. Mind dwelling upon a chosen object is meditation; which means the mind is there in meditation; mind is functioning in meditation; and mind entertains thoughts in

meditation; therefore never think meditation is silencing the mind. Vedantic meditation is not silencing the mind; it is not stopping the mind; it is not curbing the mind; it is not restraining the mind; but it is directing the mind; which means thoughts are there; but the thoughts are dealing with the subject matter that I chose. And that subject matter is whatever I have learned from the scriptures. And what have I learned? That the body is not the real I; it is an incidental instrument which will be there for a few years and will disappear; similarly sense organs, similarly the mind; they are all instruments that I handle, my higher nature is the very chaitanyam; the consciousness principle, which is aware of all of them.

This topic is discussed extensively in Chapter 2, shlokas 12-25 in the Gita. All the knowledge learned from this Sravanam is the recording process. Meditation is the retaining and reliving the teaching. Thus:

Dharana is focus.

Dhyanam is retaining the focus.

Samadhi is becoming absorbed in the subject. Here will is not required.

Sri Krishna gives example of a protected flame to describe the process.

Now seven definitions of Samadhi are provided. They are:

1. Samadhi is that stage, in which chitta uparamanam, mind subsides; mind is absorbed in itself;
2. Atma darshanam; the one's mind is absorbed in the atma darshanam; owning up one's own higher nature;
3. Atyantika sukham, I see my own higher nature.
4. Tatva nishta, is being established in one's higher nature.
5. Atyantika labha, it is a stage in which one has attained

highest in life;

6. Atyantika dukkha Nivrittihi; it is stage in which one has withdrawn from and thus one is free from all the sorrows.
7. dukkha samyoga viyogah; a stage in which a person is no more identified with the gains of anatma.

Sri Krishna then discussed Gyana phalam. This meditation transforms a person. The way I look at the world changes. The world does not change; my way of looking at it changes. One obtains freedom from ragah and dvesha. I do not get attached nor do I hate anything. I may have preferences but no attachments. As I said preferences are different from ragah-dveshah. I would prefer to have a cup of coffee is one thing; I need a cup of coffee is quite different. If you say I prefer; it is available, welcome and good; or else, OK. But when I say I need it means if that is not available; I become non-functional.

One obtains samadarshanam. One obtains equanimity. One obtains jivan mukti.

Shlokas 33-36 discusses obstacles to meditation. The specific obstacle of Vikshepa or restless mind is discussed. Two remedies are suggested for Vikshepa. First is Vairagya and second is abhyasa. Vairagya reduces raga and dvesha. **Raga dvesha is the single most important internal enemy of a spiritual seeker. We don't have any external enemies at all.** It is raga dvesha that disturbs us. It is our loves and hates that disturb us. I have provided this capacity to disturb me to Raga and dvesha. Vairagyam means reducing the ragah-dveshah slavery.

Abhyasa means practice. So practice of the meditation; here practice makes a man perfect; sheer abhyasa will improve the meditation.

The topic of meditation is now over. Arjuna , now asks a

question.

Shlokas 37-45 is a discussion of this question.

“Suppose I fail in my spiritual journey, what will happen to me?” is Arjuna’s question to Sri Krishna.

Sri Krishna answers who ever come to spirituality will gain knowledge and then moksha. Even if he does not obtain moksha he will still obtain swarga. After swarga he will obtain a very conducive birth and continue his spiritual journey taking up from where he left off in previous birth. So don’t be pessimistic Arjuna; enjoy the spiritual journey.

Shlokas 47 and 48 are the concluding verses of the chapter. They are glorification of Vedantic meditation. Of all meditators the Vedantic meditator is closest to liberation, says Sri Krishna.

This chapter is called dhyana yogah; or atma samyama yoga, because the central theme is directing the mind towards Vedantic teaching.

Take away:

1. Raga dvesha is the single most important internal enemy of a spiritual seeker.
2. Nidhidhyasanam: A person dwells upon the teaching received during sravanam; and this dwelling is done for a length of time; so that the knowledge enters my mind; enters my sub-conscious personality. In short, it irrigates my whole personality so that I and the knowledge have become one

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy

