

Reflections from Shrimad Bhagavadgita– Part 60: Chapter 6, Chapter 6 Summary

(June 26 –July 2, 2019)

ATMA SAÑYAMA YOGA



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TO
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THE
ENTIRE
CHAPTER-6
VERSES 1-47
OF
SHRIMAD
BHAGAVAD
GITA**

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The Summary of

Chapter 6

Atma Sañyama Yoga (The Yoga of Mind Control or Meditation)

(A) The Summary of Summary:

[In this chapter, Lord Krishna describes the way of meditation (The Yoga of Mind Control or Dhyān Yoga), difficulties involved in mind control (Atma Sañyama), and the techniques by which mastery of the mind can be achieved]

(B) The Most Important Verses of Chapter 6: Verses 34 and 35:

Arjuna says: “The mind is very restless, turbulent, strong and obstinate, O Krishna. It appears to me that it is more difficult to control than the wind.” Krishna replies: “No doubt,

O mighty-armed (Arjuna), the agitated mind is very difficult to control. But, oh Son of Kunti, by Abhyaasa (Practice) and Vairagyam (Detachment), it can be mastered.

Based on the contents of the 47 verses of Chapter 6, it can be divided into the following six sections:

<u>The Topic</u>	<u>Verses</u>
1. <i>Pre-requisites for Meditation</i>	1 to 9, 16, 17
2. <i>The Proper Environment for Meditation</i>	10 to 15
3. <i>The Nature and Result of Meditation</i>	18 to 32
4. <i>Obstacles and Remedies to Meditation</i>	33 to 36
5. <i>What Happens To The One Who Falls Off Meditation?</i>	37 to 45
6. <i>Praises of the Yogi</i>	46 to 47

Toward the end of Chapter 5, Lord Krishna introduced the topic of meditation. Because of the significance of meditation in human life, Lord Krishna dedicates this whole chapter 6 on the subject of meditation (*Dhyana*).

1. **Pre-requisites for Meditation**:

To start with, the Lord indicates the role of *Karmayoga* in meditation by praising the *Karmayogi* (v 1, 2). *Karmayoga*, being a conscious way of life, helps one in getting self-control. It converts an extrovert mind into a contemplative mind. Once this is achieved, one should try to lead a quieter life, because active life becomes an obstacle to meditation (v 3). Total detachment is the characteristic of a contemplative mind (v 4). Lord highlights two important virtues necessary for meditation, including **self-confidence and self-control**. One who lacks these two qualities finds oneself to be an obstacle for any pursuit. On the other hand, one who enjoys the above two virtues finds himself to be supporting force in every field (v 5, 6). Soon one is established in the vision of the *Ātmā*, the vision of equality (v 7 to 9). Lord Krishna mentions a few other disciplines also, like moderation in eating, sleeping, working, and resting (v 16, 17).

2. **The Proper Environment for Meditation**:

The meditator has to choose **a secluded, undisturbed place** for meditation (v 10). In that spiritually and physically pure place, he has to fix the seat which is neither too high nor too low, neither too soft nor too hard (v 11). **Holding the body, neck, and head erect, he has to fix the sight on the tip of his nose, as it were (i.e., the eyes are half-closed)** (v 13). Next, the meditator should **withdraw the mind and sense organs from all other activities**. The breathing also should be maintained even (v 27). With **a calm, withdrawn, undisturbed, tension-free, and one-pointed mind**, the meditator should meditate upon the Lord, the *Ātmā* (v 12, 14).

3. **The Nature and Result of Meditation:**

Meditation is nothing but *abidance of the withdrawn mind in the Ātmā* (v 18). Having given up all desires and having restrained the senses through the mind, one should *gradually bring back the mind with the help of the discriminative intellect*, step by step. *Once the mind is made to abide in the Ātmā, there should be no other thought* (v 25). Though the mind may get distracted, one has to bring it back from the respective fields to one's own Ātmā (v 26). All this presupposes a clear understanding of *Vedānta*. Everything, including thoughts, is an object of the Ātmā, the Awareness. The Ātmā is not an object for me to be thought of, or to be experienced. It is the very "I". Thus, to knock off all expectations and struggles and to abide as the Ātmā with the knowledge that *"I am the Ātmā" is true meditation*. Thus, constantly abiding in the Ātmā, the meditator comes to enjoy permanent peace which culminates in the attainment of liberation (*videhamukti*) (v 15). *He enjoys an ever-abiding mind which is completely satisfied with the discovery of the Ātmā* (v 20). Since his *ānanda* is not sensual, it transcends all the limits. *Having discovered this inner fullness, he never loses sight of his true nature* (v 21, 27, 28). Neither does he consider any other gain to be superior, nor is he shaken by even the greatest loss (v 22). This infinite *ānanda* will never be lost because this was never gained. It was veiled by the false notion that "I am sorrowful". Once this is removed, the inner *ānanda* becomes evident. Thus, this is more a dissociation from sorrow rather than association (v 23). (This alone is known as *jīvanmukti*.) *Seeing the Ātmā in all beings, and all beings in the Ātmā, he gets established in the vision of equality* (v 29). This vision of the Ātmā alone is the vision of the Lord, because the Ātmā is not different from the Lord. Thus, *the meditator is always established in the Lord despite his activities* (v 30, 31). Being established in the Ātmā, he looks at all bodies including his body with the same attitude of detachment. Hence, *he is free from selfishness and is spontaneously established in dharma. He is a saint* (v 32).

4. **Obstacles and Remedies to Meditation:**

Now, Arjuna puts a question regarding an obstacle to meditation. *It is the problem of mental restlessness* or extrovertedness. Because of this, one finds it difficult to meditate and assimilate the Self-knowledge. This frustrates *Arjuna's* mind and he asks for a solution (v 33, 34). Lord Krishna gives *two methods to solve this problem. They are practice and detachment*. When the mind is extrovert because of desires, one has to remove it by seeing the futility of desires and their fulfillment. This is detachment. Even a detached mind can be restless because of past habits. This has to be gradually removed by consistent practice alone. Thus, mental discipline requires determination and patience (v 35, 36).

5. **What Happens To The One Who Falls Off Meditation?:**

Still, Arjuna does not feel confident and he, somehow, thinks that liberation is not possible in one life. He desperately asks the Lord: "What happens to that seeker who has fallen from meditation? Does he not perish like a scattered cloud?" (Arjuna feels that the meditator has no *Puṇya*, because he has not done any *Karma*. He has failed to achieve liberation also.

Thus, being deceived of *Puṇya* and *Moksha*, he must face an unfortunate future). Not being able to accept this, Arjuna surrenders to Lord Krishna seeking clarification (v 37 to 39). The Lord consoles Arjuna by asserting that *a spiritual seeker can never have a bad lot* (v 40). *The very act of meditation is a Puṇyakarma capable of giving heaven and later an ideal birth for the continuation of the spiritual pursuit. The yogabhraṣṭa* (one who has fallen from the path of spirituality) *is reborn in a cultured, prosperous family, or may be, even in the family of a saint* (v 41, 42). *Having got such a birth, he gets associated with the previous wisdom at a very early age* (v 43). *Irresistibly drawn by the past habits (saṃskāras), he finds his spiritual urge suddenly growing from a small flame to a huge conflagration* (v 44). Committing his entire life to the spiritual pursuit and supported by the *saṃskāras* of all the previous lives, he effortlessly fulfils his mission in life (45).

6. **Praises of the Meditating Yogi:**

Lord Krishna concludes this chapter by *praising the Yogi in general* (v 46) and *praising the Yogi of Krishna-Paramātmā in particular*. He says *a Yogi is superior to a Tapasvi (Ascetic), superior to the Jñāni (a person of learning), and superior to the Karmic (a ritualistic performer).*