

## ŚRĪMADBHAGAVADGĪTĀ INTERPRETATION SUMMARY

### Chapter 6: Ātma-Saṁyama-Yoga

2/4 (Ślōka 11-20), Sunday, 02 February 2025

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YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/uZTlaxP5otw>

## Dhyana Yog purifies the inner self or the mind by removing the bad thoughts and enhances noble thoughts

Chapter 6 of the Srimad Bhagavad Gītā - **Atma Samyama Yog - The Yog of meditation and self discipline.**

The session begins with the prayer and lighting of the lamp.

Before we begin with this chapter, let's have a rapid round of quiz.

**Question :** What is special about today?

**Answer :** Today is the occasion of Vasant Panchami.

**Question:** Why is Vasant Panchami celebrated?

**Answer:** Brahma Dev created the entire world with various species. However, the entire creation was numb and was unexpressive.

He then created Devi Saraswati to shape the order of the universe. Devi Saraswati bestowed the world with the wisdom of communication, expression, creativity and sound.

It was on this day of Vasant Panchami when Devi Saraswati emanated. This day is to honor Devi Saraswati who symbolizes creativity, intelligence, knowledge, wisdom and arts or music.

**Question :** Which instrument is held by Devi Saraswati?

**Answer:** Veena

**Question:** Which color symbolises the festive of Vasant Panchami?

**Answer :** Yellow

**Question:** Which month of the Hindu calender is Vasant Panchami celebrated?

**Answer :** This festival is being celebrated on Panchami Tithi of Shukla Paksha in the month of Magha

Let's pray to Devi Saraswati to invoke her blessings and to be bestowed with knowledge and wisdom. Let's pray to Devi Saraswati to bless us with focus, grasping skills and concentration when we learn anything new.

What does this Chapter teach us?

- This chapter teaches us to develop a calm and a firm mind by engaging in meditation.
- The mind is the controller of the senses.
- But the nature of the mind is to waver (fickle). We can develop a firm control over the mind and the senses by regularly practicing meditation.
- The advanced Yogis who engage in Dhyana or meditation eventually connect to Bhagavān during the process of Dhyana.
- We are able to perform better at school and play with a sharp and alert mind by engaging in meditation.
- This Chapter also explains the best posture and aasana one should have for an effective meditation.
- It increases the power of concentration and focus.
- It purifies the inner self or the mind by removing the bad thoughts.
- We start to develop a pure mind with good and noble thoughts.

We now begin with the shlokas for today's session.

## 6.11

**śucau deśe pratiṣṭhāpya, sthīramāsanamātmanah,  
nātyucchritaṃ(n) nātinīcaṃ(ñ), cailājīnakuśottaram. 6.11**

Having firmly set his seat in a spot which is free from dirt and other impurities with the sacred Kuśa grass, deerskin and cloth spread thereon one upon the other (Kuśa below, deerskin in the middle and cloth uppermost), neither very high nor very low;

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains the quality of a perfect aasana (The meditation seat) which would help us maintain focus during meditation.

### **What is an aasana or the meditation seat?**

The purpose of a meditation asana or seat is to provide a steady and comfortable posture that allows for focused attention during meditation.

### **How does the aasana look like?**

The aasana or the seat should have three layers:

#### **1. A layer of grass thin grass**

#### **2. A layer of deer skin placed above the layer of grass**

In ancient times, sages could not arrange for a fabric or cloth in forests. Hence, they would use the skin of a dead deer to prepare the aasana. One needs to remember here that killing a living deer would incur a sin. However, in current times, we are able to arrange for a readymade aasana made out of fabric.

#### **3. A soft layer of cloth or thin cushion like material which is placed above the layer of the deer skin**

This layer avoids pricking or sticking of uneven surface to the lower part of the body that touches the aasana during the seated posture.

### **How to correctly place the aasana?**

- We are now aware that the meditative seat or aasana has three layers.
- It should not be placed too high. If incase we fall asleep during meditation, we should not fall down and get hurt.
- It should not be too low at ground level. This is to avoid insects and other small creatures from biting or crawling over us during meditation.
- The surrounding should be clean and tidy. If the surrounding is filthy with a bad odor, we will not be able to focus during meditation.

With this set up of aasana or meditation seat, one can effectively focus during the process of meditation.

## **6.12**

### **tatraikāgraṃ(m) manaḥ(kh) kṛtvā, yatacittendriyakriyāḥ, upaviśyāsane yuñjyād, yogamātmaviśuddhaye. 6.12**

And occupying that seat, concentrating the mind and controlling the functions of the mind and senses, he should practice Yoga for self purification.

Let's understand this shloka one step at a time.

#### **What are the five sense organs?**

The eyes (sense of sight), ears (sense of hearing), nose (sense of smell), tongue (sense of taste) and skin (sense of touch) form the five sense organs. The mind controls the senses.

#### **Why senses go out of control?**

- When the mind does not have a strong control over the senses, we loose control.
- Let's say the eyes (sense of sight) desires to watch YouTube or cartoons. We end up watching videos on YouTube and postpone the task of doing homework or studying.
- Let's say the ears (sense of hearing) desires to listen to music. We then decide to listen to music first and then engage in school or play.
- The desires of the senses taking control over the mind makes us loose focus.

#### **How to develop a strong control over the senses?**

We need to practice daily and meditate. By meditating daily, we slowly begin to develop better concentration and focus.

#### **What is the use of meditation?**

- It increases the power of concentration and focus.
- It purifies the inner self or the mind by removing the bad thoughts.
- We start to develop a pure mind with good and noble thoughts.

#### **Arjuna's laser sharp focus**

Once, Guru Dronacharya decided to take a test for his disciples (The Kauravas and the Pandavas). He called them one by one and instructed them to take an aim at the eye of a bird (which was on a tree). Before the disciple could release the arrow, Guru Dronacharya asked "What can you see when you are taking an aim at the bird's eye?". Every disciple who took a turn to take an aim with the bow and

arrow replied that they could see the tree, the branches, the leaves, sky, clouds, the bird and it's eye.

However, when it was Arjuna's turn, Guru Dronacharya once again asked the same question "What can you see when you are taking an aim at the bird's eye?". Arjuna replied by saying "Gurudev, I can see the eye and only the eye of the bird". Guru Dronacharya was pleased with Arjuna and asked him to release the arrow. The arrow then pierced the eye of the bird.

### What can we learn from Arjuna?

- We need to put in our complete focus and concentration on the task at hand.
- To develop a calm and focussed mind like Arjuna, we need to practice meditation everyday to increase the power of focus and concentration.

## 6.13

**ṣamaṃ(ñ) kāyaśirogrīvaṃ(n), dhārayannacalaṃ(m) sthiraḥ,  
saṃprekṣya nāsikāgraṃ(m) svaṃ(n), diśaścānavalokayan. 6.13**

Holding the trunk, head and neck straight and steady, remaining firm and fixing the gaze on the tip of his nose, without looking in other directions.

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains the best posture for an effective meditation

### What should be the posture for meditation?

- We should sit erect.
- Our back, neck should be erect and straight.
- The position of the head should also be straight aligning to the back and neck in a straight line.
- Eyes to focuss on tip of nose.

### Why should we sit erect in a straight posture?

- The information (motor and sensory stimuli) from the brain is relayed to the spinal cord.
- In the straight and erect posture of the back, neck and head aids to enhance focus.
- With constant and regular practice of meditation with this posture, the focus and concentration power is enhanced.

One can sit erect at all times, while studying or any other activity and it is not necessary to practice this posture only at the time of meditation

## 6.14

**praśāntātmā vigatabhīḥ(r), brahmacārivrate sthitaḥ,  
manaḥ(s) saṃyamya maccitto, yukta āsīta matparaḥ. 6.14**

Firm in the vow of complete chastity and fearlessness, keeping himself perfectly calm and with the mind held in restraint and fixed on Me, the vigilant Yogī should sit absorbed in Me.

In this shloka, we can learn that regular practice of meditation leads to a calm mind.

### What is a calm mind?

A calm mind is an alert mind. It is free from disturbance and distraction.

## How to develop a calm mind?

- Practice meditation regularly.
- By being fearless (avoid being scared towards non-dangerous things like an insect, grasshopper etc).
- Follow brahmacharya - It is the duty of every student to sincerely engage in studies. Studying should be a daily habit.

## What are the five qualities of a student?

The below shloka explains the qualities of a student.

**“Kak chesta bako dhyanam, shwan nidra tathaiwa cha Alpahaari grihtyaagi Vidyarthi pancha lakshnam”.**

**Vidyarthi** – **Vidhya** means knowledge and arthi means one who desires knowledge. All students should possess panch lakshnam, these five characteristic features, and qualities.

### 1. Kaka Chesta (The efforts of a Crow)

All of us in our childhood have read the story of the crow who was extremely thirsty and was flying around and looking for the water. The crow found a pitcher of water. As the crow landed itself on the rim of the pitcher and looked inside at the content he found there was water but the water was at the very bottom of the pitcher and there was no way that the crow could drink water by putting its beak inside. The crow started thinking what should be done and he comes across a brilliant idea. It started looking around and started picking up in its beak tinny pebbles and putting them inside the pitcher. Pebble by Pebble by Pebble, the crow kept working hard until the level of the water rose way up to the rim of the pitcher and the crow quenched its thirst.

Kaka chesta referred to the patience, hard work and the efforts of the crow.

### 2. Bako dhyanam (The focus of a Crane)

The intense focus of the crane can be seen when one looks at the crane standing on one leg completely focused on the water. The crane with one-pointed attention will be looking at the water as the fishes pass inside the water. It teaches to focus on what is important.

### 3. Shwan Nidra (The alertness of a Dog)

Shwan means dog and nidra means sleep. The shwannidra means the sleep of a dog. To be more precise the alertness of a dog. All of us have actually seen when a dog is sleeping although it will close its eyes close, the dog will be on alert. Even if there is a slight disturbance or little sound in its surroundings it will immediately open its eyes. We need to learn the quality of being alert.

### 4. Alpahaari ( Inputs we give to our senses )

Ahaar means food and alpa means less. So literally Alpahaari means that a vidyarthi or one seeking knowledge should consume less. Now, this isn't what is implied in this word. All our sensory organs do have abundant food to feed on, for example for our tongue we have food, for our ears, sound is the Ahaar, for our eyes visual scenes are the Ahaar. Alpahaari refers to being balanced with the senses.

### 5. Gruha Tyagi (ready to leave the home or comfort zone)

A Vidyadhī should have an open mind to explore the world leaving his / her comfort zone (say going to a hostel or a different place for higher studies).

Those who follow the above steps are able to connect with the Divine by engaging in meditation.

#### 6.15

**yuñjannevaṃ(m) sadātmānaṃ(m), yogī niyatamānaśaḥ,  
śāntiṃ(n) nirvāṇaparamāṃ(m), matsaṃsthāmadhigacchati. 6.15**

Thus constantly applying his mind to Me, the Yogī of disciplined mind attains the everlasting peace, consisting of Supreme Bliss, which abides in Me.

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains that we need to develop a calm mind, which can be achieved by practicing meditation regularly.

If we practice meditation with sincerity & devotion, and by focussing our mind on Bhagavān during meditation (with pure devotion towards HIM), we will eventually become a favourite devotee of Bhagavān

#### 6.16

**nātyaśnatastu yogo'sti, na caikāntamaṇāśnataḥ,  
na cātisvapnaśīlasya, jāgrato naiva cārjuna. 6.16**

Arjuna, this yoga is neither for him who overeats, nor for him who observes a complete fast; it is neither for him who is given to too much sleep, nor even for him who is ceaselessly awake.

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains the rules for Dhyana or meditation.

#### **What are the rules or guidelines for an effective meditation?**

- The surroundings should be clean and tidy. If the environment is filthy, the mind will be drawn towards the filth which would reduce the focus and concentration.
- Aasana or meditation seat should neither be placed too high or too low.
- As mentioned in the earlier shloka, if it is placed too high, one might fall down and get hurt. If it is too low, the insects might crawl over us which would be a source of distraction.
- Sleep as much as needed (say 8hrs for children) - neither too long nor too less.
- By being disciplined with the sleeping hours regularly, the mind would be more calm and focussed.
- Avoid overeating or eating too less. We should eat healthy and as much as it is needed.
- By following the Sattvik diet (say fruits, vegetables, pulses etc), it is easy to attain higher levels of focus during meditation.

#### 6.17

**yuktāhāravihārasya, yuktaceṣṭasya karmasu,  
yuktasvapnābodbhāsyā, yogo bhavati duḥkhaḥ. 6.17**

Yoga which rids one of woe, is accomplished only by him who is regulated in diet and recreation, regulated in performing actions, and is regulated in sleep and wakefulness.

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains how meditation is the key to attain a balanced mind.

### **What is a balanced mind?**

- Every activity that we do, say for example watching videos on YouTube, play time, sleep hours (say 8hrs), yoga, listening to music, eating meals in the right proportion etc must be balanced.
- In a nutshell, it should not exceed our capacity nor decrease in the required proportion.
- Say for example, if we engage in yoga, it should be done in moderate duration. By practicing yoga for 8-10 hrs, the body would have muscle strains and we would be in pain for few days.
- In the same manner, if we over-eat beyond the required limit of food, it would lead to digestion issues and other forms of
- 
- discomfort.
- Consider another example of watching videos on YouTube. If this is done continuously for few hours, our eyes would be strained and it could also lead to a headache.

Being balanced here refers to doing the daily activities with the required duration/quantity.

### **How can we implement the teachings of this shloka daily?**

- Even when we study, instead of feeling bored or distracted with other thoughts, we need to put in our heart and soul, and also complete focus for an effective study time.
- We should avoid doing activities half-heartedly and put in the best possible focus and concentration.

By practicing the above, one would achieve higher levels with Dhyana or meditation.

## **6.18**

**yadā viniyataṃ(ñ) cittam, ātmanyevāvaśiṣṭhate,  
niḥspṛhaḥ(s) sarVākāmebhyo, yukta ityucyate tadā. 6.18**

When the mind which is thoroughly disciplined, gets riveted on God alone, then the person who is free from yearning for all enjoyments is said to be established in Yoga.

From this shloka, we need to understand that meditation is a constant and a regular practice. Every activity that we do (studying, playing, walking, etc) will eventually have increased levels of awareness by practicing meditation regularly.

### **What is awareness?**

- Awareness is to have a better understanding about a subject or experience.
- It is easy to grasp a subject if we focus with awareness.

### **How does meditation increase awareness?**

- With constant practice of meditation, we will be able to do every activity with awareness.
- Slowly, with constant practice, the mind would be more calm and balanced.
- Those with a calm mind will be able to accept everything as the Divine Will.
- Those who have reached this higher states will not weep over the spilt milk.

## **6.19**



**yathā dīpo nivāstho, neṅgate sopamā smṛtā,  
yogino yatacittasya, yuñjato yogamātmanaḥ. 6.19**

As a flame does not flicker in a windless place, such is stated to be the picture of the disciplined mind of Yogī practicing meditation on God.

In this shloka, Bhagavān explains the level of focus of an advanced Yogi. We all have seen a candle flame. When it is windy, the flame wavers and is not stable. When there is no wind, the flame does not waver (It is stable). In the same manner, an advanced Yogi who engages in meditation has a stable focus. The mind does not waver like the flame. As a beginner to meditation, it would take years of practice to attain this state

**6.20**

**yatropaRāmate cittam(n), niruddham(m) yogasevayā,  
yatra caivātmanātmānam(m), paśyannātmani tuṣyati. 6.20**

The state in which the Chitta (mind), subdued through the practice of Yoga, becomes completely tranquil, and in which, realizing God through subtle reasoning purified by meditation on God, the soul rejoices only in God.

Once the mind is absorbed in meditation, what does the yogi see? What realisation does he attain?

Bhagavān explained:

**Yatra paramate chittam niruddham :** Through dedicated yogic practice (**yogasevayā**), the mind becomes "**niruddha**" (completely restrained and absorbed in Paramātmā).

Patañjali Muni has described five states of the mind:

1. **Mūḍha Chitta : Dull or ignorant state.** A mind dominated by *Tamoguṇa*, is unaware of itself or its surroundings, like a stone or a tree. They are completely ignorant about their surroundings.
2. **Kṣipta Chitta : Restless or Scattered state.** A mind dominated by *Rajoguṇa*, is extremely restless and constantly moving from one thought to another.
3. **Vikṣipta Chitta : Distracted state.** A mind that sometimes becomes stable through yoga but then gets distracted again. It attains focus for a short time but then returns to restlessness.
4. **Ekāgra Chitta : One-pointed focussed state.** A focused mind where only two things remain - the meditator (**dhyāta**) and the object of meditation (**dheya**). The mind becomes completely concentrated on the Divine.
5. **Niruddha Chitta : Completely restrained state.** This is the highest state, where even the meditator dissolves into the object of meditation. The mind is no longer separate; it merges completely into Paramātmā.

At this **niruddha** stage, there is no longer a distinction between the seeker and the sought, only Divine realisation remains. The yogi rejoices in the inner Self / inner joy.

When a yogi reaches a state of deep meditation, he perceives the Supreme (Paramātmā), but as he continues meditating, something profound happens. At first, he is seeing Paramātmā, but then he realises that HE is none other than himself (**Ātmanā ātmānam paśyati**). The duality disappears. This realisation brings immense contentment, boundless bliss, and supreme happiness (**Tuṣyanti**).



## What is the Nature of This Bliss?

Bhagavān further described that the joy experienced at this stage is **beyond worldly pleasures. It is paramānanda** (supreme bliss), a joy that surpasses anything the material world can offer.

This is the state where **meditation is no longer an effort**, it is a complete merging into the Divine, where the seeker (sādhaka) and the sought (Paramātmā) become one.



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### Jai Shri Krishna!

Compiled by: Geeta Pariwar – Creative Writing Department

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