

Review: Structure of the Bhagavad Gita

Chapter 1: *Arjuna viṣāda yoga* (sorrow acts as catalyst): Sets the context; what is good person

Chapter 2: *Sāṅkhya yoga*—overview of a person's life; summary of entire teaching; how tools of *karma* and *jñānam* come together to help you find happiness

Chapter 3: *Karma yoga*—*karma* to be used as a *yoga*

Chapters 4, 5—focus moves from *karma* → *jñāna*

Chapter 4: *jñāna karma sannyāsa yoga*—*Śravaṇam*: introduction to self-understanding

Chapter 5: *Sannyāsa yoga*—*Mananam*- analysis – reconciliation with contrary experience

Chapter 6: *Dhyāna yoga*—Yoga of meditation – of gaining the fruits of understanding

Chapters 1-6: *Tvam pada vācya*; focus on the individual

Chapters 7-12: *Tat pada vācya*; functioning of *Īśvara*/God

Chapters 12-18: *Asi pada vācya*; identity of intrinsic (vs. incidental) parts of *Īśvara* and individual

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CHAPTER 6

Dhyāna yoga; yoga of meditation

Based on *nididhyāsanam* (it has to be meditated upon)

- Meditation is not considered to be an independent source of knowledge and freedom
- It depends upon a clear and comprehensive introduction to what to meditate on.
- It is not thoughtlessness.

Yoga Sutras vs. Vedanta

- Similarities: *sadhana*, how to meditate
- Dissimilarity: end result of meditation; Yoga Sutras: absence of thoughts; Vedanta: absence of thought is neither achievable on a long term basis nor necessary. Total absence of thought is like saying, "I must wait for all the waves in the ocean to calm down before I can understand that I am the water."
- It is a limb (*aṅga*), not the main stem (*aṅgi*). Main stem is *śrāvaṇam* and *mananam*.
- This is why it is in the last chapter about the individual.

6 Sub-topics:

1. Qualifications for meditation
 - a. ***Samatvam***: Equanimity in transactions. It will be hard to meditate if you're upset and reacting to life (you have strong likes/dislikes/opinions). You have to normalize the ups and downs and relax a bit.
 - b. ***Vairāgyam***: Clarity in your priorities. If you love it and think it's important, you're always thinking of it. Like being in love with a special person.

Q: Why does *Vedanta* leave me the second I walk out of the classroom?

Swami TV: Because you have not learned to love it yet.

- c. **Ātma viśvāsa**: Self-confidence/sense of cheerfulness.
 - i. Main stem is a reasonably-thorough study of *Vedanta*. Issue of God is brought out very clearly so that you don't feel alone in your life. I am going to be ok. Like knowing the results of the game before watching it—you can then enjoy the plays and players, even if you know the ending. The uncertainty of whether my team will win or lose is not there.
2. Preparation for meditation
 - a. Physical
 - i. Seclusion: quiet place; get up early, if needed
 - ii. Right ambiance: portion of home maintained for meditation
 - iii. Focus on: pose, sense organs, breathing (connects you w/*Īśvara*)
 - Namaste vayo tvameva pratyaksham brahmasmi -- Taittiriya Upaniṣad*
 - iv. *Yajñas*: discipline + appreciation for *Īśvara*; Without *Īśvara* it's just exercise. Bring *Īśvara* in your awareness on breathing
 - b. Mental
 - i. Which window are the thoughts coming in through? Past – Present – Future?
 - ii. Not dwelling on past regrets or future anxieties. Just take a quick look at your thoughts now... you'll find past/future worries here! Dwelling on the past is like beating on a dead body.
 - iii. Be very careful with how you speak to others. Mental wounds are much harder to heal than physical wounds.
3. Process of meditation
 - a. **Dhāraṇā**: Start absorption (*not* concentration). Like being immersed in a good book, where you don't hear the call for breakfast. [bike riding: learning to balance w/help of parents] [movie: still aware of surroundings, but starting to dissociate from life outside movie]
 - b. **Dhyāna**: Maintain absorption [bike riding: keep the balance as you start to ride on your own] [movie: seeing the movie as an object but still there as a moviegoer]
 - c. **Samādhi**: Make it natural/automatic where you don't have to try. You've done it often enough it's on autopilot [bike riding: you're so comfortable balancing you can text while riding!] [movie: if it's good, you're so absorbed that you identify with actors and plot]

IMPORTANT: Not thoughtlessness, but being absorbed in a new subject matter.

Life is a complex 3D puzzle with bits and pieces all over the place. *Śravaṇam* and *mananam* is the process of putting pieces together, but the whole picture is not

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quite clear. If you keep working on it with the help of the teachings and *śāstra*, a picture starts to emerge and then things accelerate.

4. Object of meditation

a. *Saguṇa brahman*: God with qualities/form; Intelligence + material of whole creation

→ *dhyānam*

b. *Nirguṇa brahman*: God without qualities/form

→ *Nididhyāsanam*

* a is essential for b: Wave may disappear, but water will never disappear. See yourself both as aspect of *saguṇa brahman* and very nature of *nirguṇa brahman*

5. Obstacles to meditation

a. *Tamas*: falling asleep in class; meditating after a meal; excessive tiredness

Remedy:

- Practice (*abhyāsa*)
- Get enough sleep

b. *Vikṣepa*: wandering of the mind

Remedy:

- Learning to *love* the subject (like a good book/movie)
- Auto-suggestion: *sankalpa* (tell your mind who's the boss here!)

6. Benefits of meditation

a. Freedom from wanting to change/become

b. Contentment

c. Fullness: *purnatvam*

***Bhava sagar*: Ocean of Becoming**

Examine how you're conducting your life and see an element common to all of us: I want to change and become something different, all is not well, but if I do xyz I will be better.

Adopt a new narrative: Not becoming, but being exactly what you are. There is nothing that you don't have.

Vijayji's Recommendation: Print notes from website and make a booklet; review the notes and refresh the material in your mind before we move into Chapter 7.

Download *Tattvabodha* (Vijayji will send pdf) and supplement our learning here with this book.