

॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता ॥

BHAGAVAD GEETA – 6

The Yoga of Self-Abidance

“THE SANDEEPANY EXPERIENCE”

**TEXT
28.06**

Reflections by
SWAMI GURUBHAKTANANDA





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List of All the Course Texts in Chronological Sequence:

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1	<i>Sadhana Panchakam</i>	24	<i>Hanuman Chalisa</i>
2	<i>Tattwa Bodha</i>	25	<i>Vakya Vritti</i>
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4	<i>Bhaja Govindam</i>	27	<i>Kaivalya Upanishad</i>
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6	<i>Forgive Me</i>	29	<i>Mundaka Upanishad</i>
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10	<i>Bodha Sara</i>	33	<i>The Mahavakyas, Panchadasi 5</i>
11	<i>Viveka Choodamani</i>	34	<i>Aitareya Upanishad</i>
12	<i>Jnana Sara</i>	35	<i>Narada Bhakti Sutras</i>
13	<i>Drig-Drishya Viveka</i>	36	<i>Taittiriya Upanishad</i>
14	<i>"Tat Twam Asi" – Chand Up 6</i>	37	<i>Jivan Sutrani (Tips for Happy Living)</i>
15	<i>Dhyana Swaroopam</i>	38	<i>Kena Upanishad</i>
16	<i>"Bhoomaiva Sukham" Chand Up 7</i>	39	<i>Aparoksha Anubhuti (Meditation)</i>
17	<i>Manah Shodhanam</i>	40	<i>108 Names of Pujya Gurudev</i>
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This series is an effort to promote the learning of Vedanta; it does not replace the Course, but hopes to inspire young people to spend two years of their life for an experience that is sure to make a far-reaching spiritual impact on their personal lives. Sandeepany is an all-round spiritual course that gives proper direction to the youth and to those approaching retirement. Hinduism is in dire need of a band of systematically trained teachers or Acharyas who can serve this Eternal Religion.

– The Author, February 2019, Shivaratri Day

Om Namah Shivaaya!

Text
28.06



आत्मसंयमयोगः

THE BHAGAVAD GEETA – 6

“The Yoga of SELF-ABIDANCE”

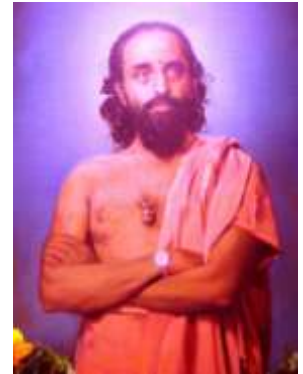
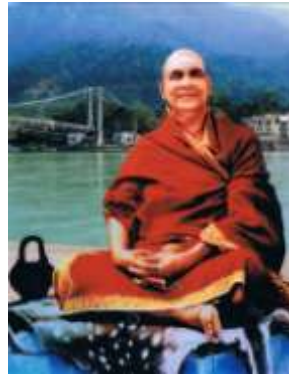
Sri Veda Vyasaji

Reflections

by Swami Gurubhaktananda

*on the 15 Lectures delivered by Swami Advayanandaji
Acharyaji, 15th Batch Vedanta Course
at Sandeepany Sadhanalaya, Powai, Mumbai*

19th April – 3rd May, 2013



Adi Shankaracharya

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Personal Dedication

1. To my Parents, Smt Sharadaben & Sri Ratilalbhai Kapitan

who inspired me to study in life, to stick to the path of Dharma and pursue the highest ideals; and swamped me with their abundant Love;

2. To Pujya Sri Swami Vimalanandaji Maharaj

the President of the Divine Life Society of Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, India, who constantly encouraged and supported this effort;

3. To Pujya Sri Swami Tejomayanandaji (Guruji)

for his boundless vision and inspiration to create a vibrant organisation;

4. To Sri Swami Advayanandaji and Sri Swami Sharadanandaji

my Acharyaji and Upa-Acharyaji at Sandeepany, who imparted their bountiful knowledge and wisdom with rare selfless Divine Love, just as the Rishis of yore would wish to see them do.

BHAGAVAD GEETA - 6

“The Yoga of Self-Abidance”

॥ श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता ॥

अथ षष्ठोऽध्यायः

आत्मसंयमयोगः

THE BHAGAVAD GEETA

Discourse – 6 (47 Verses)

“Yoga of Self-Abidance”

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF REVIEW OF the thought-flow up to this point is very useful, and this was done by Acharyaji for our immense benefit.

After the first round of instruction from the Lord on Saankhya and Yoga (the goal and the means to achieve it), we began the third Chapter with Arjuna’s question on which of the two paths is better: **Karma Yoga**, the path of action; or **Saankhya Yoga**, the path of knowledge. These definitions are as Arjuna understood them at first hearing. In his understanding, they appeared to him as two “options” opened up by the Lord. The Lord’s considered reply to Arjuna was made from Arjuna’s level of understanding. He said, “For you personally, the path of Action is the better to begin with. Saankhya Yoga needs some preliminary preparation before you can start it.”

As we progressed through the explanation of the path of Karma Yoga in Chapter 3, we found that the path was more subtle than simply engaging oneself in good actions. There was an element of knowledge that was found to be an essential part of it. This aspect was taken up in Chapter 4 specifically, where it was shown that the two, knowledge and action, had to go together, like two sides of the same coin. The Lord further introduced the idea of renunciation of action in this Chapter. So action was to be done with knowledge as well as some renunciation. It was found that the inner attitude of renunciation, and the knowledge of the Goal, the Self, was to be kept in mind at all times during one’s actions. All three combined together is what makes up “Karma Yoga”. Thus Chapter 4 explained thoroughly the subtle difference between action performed with ego, and inaction performed after renouncing ego, and having knowledge as its support.

We went into Chapter 5 with another question from Arjuna, similar to the one he posed in Chapter 3, but this time from a more informed position, a position of strength and maturity. He accepted that knowledge and Yoga had to go together. However, he was not certain whether this Yoga meant involvement in actions or renunciation of actions. His question showed that he had been listening with full attention, but just needed some clarity, wanting to know clearly which path he should take: **Karma Yoga** (the Yoga of Action), or **Karma Sannyasa** (the Yoga of Renunciation of Action).

Therefore, Chapter 5 was spent clarifying that both these paths are really different parts of the same road leading to the same Goal. The Karma Yoga is for the one who has a

lesser degree of Vairagya while the Karma Sannyasa is for the one who has developed his Vairagya to a much higher level. The latter can afford to give up the prescribed duties that pertain to a householder, and plunge himself into serious whole-time Sadhana – that is, the intensification of his meditational practices.

Chapter 5 again and again emphasized that the Karma Yogi will reach the same goal as the Karma Sannyasi if he adheres strictly to the principles of Karma Yoga, especially Akartritva. He need not be perturbed that he is on an inferior path; he is simply on a path that has a gentler gradient than the steep path of Sannyasa.

With that background we enter Chapter 6, requiring now only to make ourselves *eligible* for the practice of meditation proper. This is the need of the seeker at this point of his Sadhana. Thus, we begin the Yoga of Meditation, which is to be seen as the final stage that will culminate in realization of **Brahma Nirvaanam**, or Absolute Freedom as spoken of in the last Chapter. Karma Yoga, Karma Sannyasa Yoga and meditation – all these are stages we pass through as we advance in our journey towards Saankhya Yoga or Union with the Self. All these steps, in that order, are together called **Buddhi Yoga**, the Path of Wisdom.

A large part of Chapter 6 deals with preparing us to become eligible for the practice of meditation. It clearly re-states the milestones (mentioned already under Chapter 5), by which we may ensure our eligibility for meditation.



BHAGAVAD GEETA – 6
“The Yoga of Self-Abidance”

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6.1 ELIGIBILITY FOR MEDITATION

(Verses 1-3, 3 No.)

THE CHAPTER OPENS BY clarifying who becomes eligible to practice meditation. What are the key qualifications needed to enter this practice? Lord Krishna begins by restating the central teaching of the last chapter – the common ground of the Sannyasin and the Yogi, and the clear definition of what Renunciation is.

Verse 1: *The True Sannyasi and Yogi*

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।

स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निरन चाक्रियः

॥ ६-१॥

śrībhagavānuvāca |

anāśritaḥ karmaphalaṁ kāryaṁ karma karōti yaḥ |

sa saṁnyāsī ca yōgī ca na niragnirna cākriyaḥ

|| 6-1||

	<i>Shree Bhagavaana Uvaacha:</i>	<i>The Blessed Lord said:</i>
1	<i>Anaashritah karma-phalam,</i>	<i>Without depending on the <u>fruits</u> of action,</i>
2	<i>kaaryam karma karoti yah;</i>	<i>he who performs his bounden duty;</i>
3	<i>Sah sannyaasee cha yogee cha,</i>	<i>He is a Sannyasi, he is a Yogi,</i>
4	<i>na niragnih na cha akriyah.</i>	<i>not he who is without the sacred fire, nor he who does not do any action.</i>

1 We will recall from Chapter 2 that renunciation of the fruits of one's actions is the minimum qualification required to start the entire spiritual path. It is not just common ground of the two paths, but the starting point of both paths and any other path.

2 Kaaryam Karma: "Bounden duty". This covers all Nitya and Naimitika Karmas; Kamya and Nishiddha Karmas are excluded. Acts of sacrifice are considered to be one's bounden duty, and no other actions. Elsewhere, the Lord has said unambiguously that acts of sacrifice should never be given up by any person, even the Sannyasin or advanced seeker.

3 There is no doubt whatsoever as to who is counted in as a candidate for the path of meditation – both the Karma Sannyasi and the Karma Yogi are placed on the same footing at the very outset. They are not differentiated. This would have put Arjuna at ease as well as all attention to hear more.

4 This Pada is a very important one to grasp. Two common misunderstandings about who is a Sannyasin or a Yogi are cleared at the very beginning.

i) **The Sacred Fire:** A householder was obliged to perform the fire ritual as an act of sacrifice, indicating his co-operation with the cosmic cycle described in Chapter 3. Only the

Sannyasin was exempted from this sacrificial act, due to the more pressing task of spending more time in his meditational practice.

The point being made here is that it must not be thought that by merely giving up the sacred fire sacrifice, a person may be called a Sannyasin. That would be ludicrous.

ii) **Engagement in Work:** The Sannyasin, for the same reason as given above, is also exempt from normal work that brings income to a household. Such activities are discontinued, in the interests of spiritual practices.

Here the point being made is that it must not be thought that by merely giving up work one becomes a Sannyasin. That, too, would be ridiculous!

By clearing these two misunderstandings in the very first verse, the Lord shows how important it is to understand correctly who a Sannyasin or Karma Yogi is, and who a householder is. He can now proceed further with the subject of eligibility for meditation.

This verse also has another purpose in mind as far as the Lord as a teacher is concerned. It is addressed to both the Sannyasi and the Karma Yogi, the intention being that the Karma Yogi should not feel 'left out', as it were. Lord Krishna is very careful that He takes the novice Karma Yogi on board with Him at all times, however remote he may be from the subject on hand, in this case from the Sadhana of meditation.

A further consideration is this. There exists among Sadhakas a general tendency to prematurely give up actions in their eagerness to do meditation. In this regard, the Lord would rather see the aspirant continue with his good, selfless activities well into the meditational phase than to see activities prematurely curtailed for the sake of meditation. Abandoning activity should only be done at a very advanced stage of meditation Sadhana. In this way, He pays special attention to the Karma Yogi in the opening two verses.

Verse 2: *Who is a Yogi?*

यं संन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव ।

न ह्यसंन्यस्तसङ्कल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन

॥ ६-२॥

yaṁ saṁnyāsamiti prāhuryōgaṁ taṁ viddhi pāṇḍava |

na hyasaṁnyastasaṅkalpō yōgī bhavati kaścana

|| 6-2||

1	<i>Yam sannyasam iti praahuh,</i>	<i>That which is called renunciation –</i>
2	<i>yogam tam viddhi paandava;</i>	<i>know that, O Pandava, to be Yoga;</i>
3	<i>na hi asannyasta-sankalpah,</i>	<i>He who has not renounced imaginations,</i>
4	<i>yogee bhavati kashchana.</i>	<i>verily does not become a (Dhyana) Yogi.</i>

Sannyasa & Yoga are One

1-2 The term **Sannyasam** focuses on the renunciation aspect of spiritual life, while the term **Yoga** focuses on the attainment aspect of spiritual life, i.e. the goal of uniting with the Divine. The former *detaches* from the world, and the latter *attaches* to God. The two are really just different ways of looking at the same spiritual path. The first looks at where we are coming from and the second looks at where we are heading. Both are needed.

Hence, renunciation is said to be Yoga. Attainment depends on renunciation. The two cannot be separated. We cannot attain something unless something else is renounced. Conversely, we will not have the will to renounce something unless we are pulled towards something else that we wish to have more.

The Progressive Range of Renunciation & Yoga

Renunciation and Yoga cover a wide variety, ranging from the simplest to the most difficult. With each meaning, the name of the Yoga changes.

Renunciation begins by renouncing thoughts of anxiety and worry over the fruits of actions. From this beginning, it grows into an inner mental attitude of indifference towards sense pleasures and objects. It then develops to more and more advanced forms, such as renouncing the ego-consciousness implied in 'doership'. Soon the point arrives when one takes up formal Sannyasa and renounces all income-earning activity (work). Finally, it ends when every trace of ego is renounced and God is realised. This is the range of renunciation.

As one's level of renunciation progresses in the above manner, the name of the Yoga for that stage correspondingly changes. For Arjuna, Yoga would mean Karma Yoga; that is where Sri Krishna has placed him. Later comes Bhakti Yoga; then with Akartritva comes Karma Sannyasa Yoga; with further renunciation which this Chapter will detail, we become eligible for Dhyana Yoga; beyond that lies the ultimate union with God, which is termed Samadhi or **Jeeva-Brahmaikya Yoga** (the union of the individual soul to the Supreme Soul).

3 Sankalpa: "*vain imaginations*". In this Pada, we are dealing with the level of renunciation required to begin meditation, as the context is eligibility for meditation. In this context, we are required to give up all vain imaginations in order to begin Dhyana Yoga. The discussion on Pada **2** makes it easy to understand the meaning of this line.

Why is imagination singled out as an obstacle to meditation? 'Sankalpa' carries with it a sense of the imagination concerning the unknown future, especially our goal. It wants to keep changing the goal we have set for ourselves. Its presence is as good as robbing us of any meaningful goal in life. Until this tendency is renounced, we can never fix our energies on any single pursuit in life, be it meditation or anything else.

4 Yogee Bhavati: "*become a Yogi*". In the broader context of the Chapter, the term here refers to becoming a Dhyana Yogi or the meditator.

The following sequence is taken for granted: The Karma Yogi becomes a Bhakta Yogi; he then becomes the Yoga Yuktah who is ready to become the Karma Sannyasi; he then becomes the Dhyana Yogi, as mentioned here. In this sense, the Karma Yogi who sincerely sticks to the practice of Karma Yoga, is classified by the Lord as a 'Dhyana Yogi-to-be', as he will eventually become eligible for meditation.

The Lord seems to know Arjuna only too well – the result of their long-standing friendship. He knows that Arjuna has a 'fascination' for meditation that is tempting him to opt for Karma Sannyasa prematurely, and so He takes the precaution to ensure that Arjuna, the Karma Yogi, does not prematurely give up all his good work and become Arjuna, the Dhyana Yogi, when he listens to the rest of this Chapter. The Lord is cautioning seekers like Arjuna, who have yet much ground to cover in Karma Yoga, not to 'jump the gun'.

There is a term coined in the Geeta for Sadhakas at each progressive stage of their development in Sadhana. We have already seen what the terms are for the first three milestones in the last Chapter. This Chapter will continue charting the progress through

another two milestones. The next verse retraces the 2nd milestone, named **Aarurukshah**, which we have come across in Chapter 5.

Verse 3: *The Sadhaka and the Siddha*

आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते ।

योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते

॥ ६-३॥

āruruṣṭōrmunēryōgaṁ karma kāraṇamucyātē |

yōgārūḍhasya tasyaiva śamaḥ kāraṇamucyātē

|| 6-3||

1	Aarurukshoh muneh yogam,	For a seeker who is still climbing up Yoga (<u>Sadhaka</u>),
2	karma kaaranam uchyate;	<u>action</u> is said to be the means;
3	yogaaroodhasya tasya eva,	For the same seeker who has attained it (<u>Siddha</u>),
4	shama kaaranam uchyate.	<u>inaction</u> (quiescence) is said to be the means.

The climb from Karma Yoga to Dhyana Yoga is being clarified here, by seeing it through a magnifying glass! The climb starts with the **Aaruruksha** at the 2nd milestone, and ends with the **Yoga-Aaroodha** at the 4th milestone. That is the stretch we are looking at in this verse.

AARURUKSHA: The Karma Yogi at the 2nd Milestone

The Karma Yogi as a **Sadhaka** at the 1st milestone just beginning Karma Yoga, is not involved in this section of the climb. His job is completed.

1-2 Aarurukshah: “one who is striving to climb up the ladder of Yoga”. He has already renounced the fruits of action, and is now at the 2nd Milestone. The term Aaruruksha literally means “one who is mounting the steed (horse) of Yoga”. He is preparing to make the journey through Sravana in search of knowledge. For such a seeker, intense mental and intellectual action is said to be the means to progress.

To recap from Chapter 5, the **Aarurukshah** is the Karma Yogi who has worked hard to develop sufficient dispassion not to be troubled by his senses. This qualifies him to approach his Guru for further instruction in the knowledge of the Self. He has mounted the ‘horse’ of his mind and is trotting up the Yoga ladder.

Kaaranam: “the means”; any means implies that there is an end to the action engaged in when the goal is reached. The end of the action of obtaining knowledge is not explicitly stated in the verse, and we have to extrapolate it to mean the condition that makes one *eligible* for meditation, since that is the topic here. That end is represented by the 4th milestone . . .

YOGA-AAROODHA: The Karma Sannyasin at the 4th Milestone

3-4 Yogaaroodha: “one who can now dismount his steed”, having reached the end of the ‘Action’ stretch of his journey. This is our first encounter with this term which marks the 4th milestone. It has a special meaning in the connotation of the Geeta. It marks the beginning of the ‘Actionless’ stretch of his Sadhana, namely, intense meditation. The person is now eligible for meditation and is called a Dhyana Yogi.

In comparison with the Aarurukshah, the Yoga-Aaroodha may be regarded as a perfect Karma Yogi. His climb has ended, and he can now devote himself to undisturbed meditation.

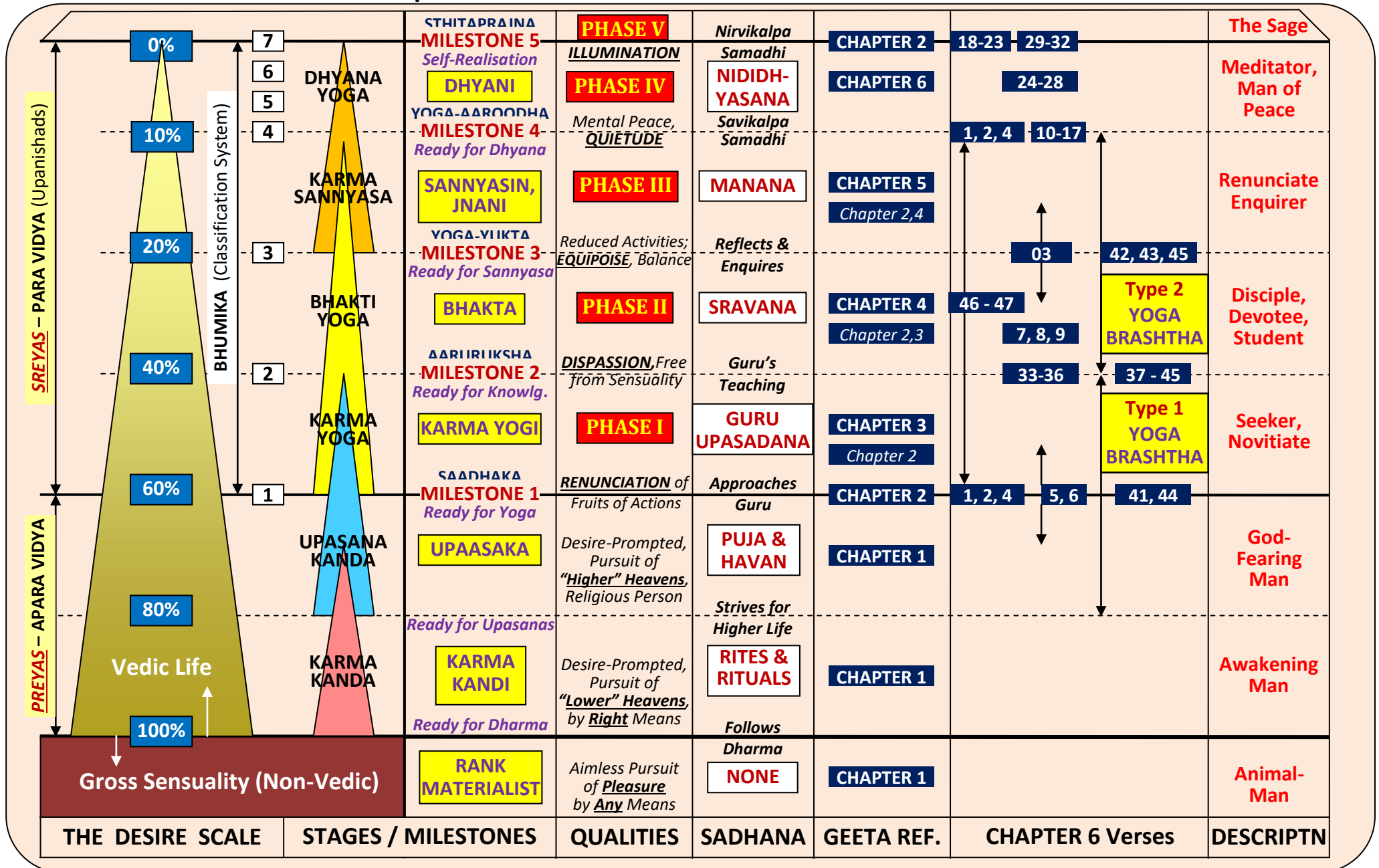
The state of mind at the 4th milestone is one of complete calmness and peace. He has come to a point where he becomes very one-pointed in mind (due to **Chitta Ekagrata**). He also gains the state of mental quietude (due to **Chitta Shuddhi**). This is the characteristic of the Yoga-Aaroodhah state. It is a tremendous achievement in spiritual life. It is equivalent to Savikalpa Samadhi or knocking at the door of God-realisation. Such a person, although not yet at the Goal, is nevertheless so close to it that he is called a Siddha or perfected Yogi by the world. He is an exceptional soul, indeed. There are very few in this world who reach this elevated state of spirituality.

It is that perfection which entitles him in the first place to formally renounce actions themselves, for he has understood and is practising the essence of renunciation. For him, actions are no longer necessary – they have served their purpose. Inaction becomes the means for such a rare, qualified soul. He now needs more quietude and solitude to proceed further. He is eligible to pursue the highest levels of meditational practice.

The Yoga-Aaroodhah is one step away from Nirvikalpa Samadhi, which is God-realisation. In Sadhana, he is in a league of his own, which very few aspirants reach.



BHAGAVAD GEETA: Chapters 1 – 6 SUMMARY – The Individual's Progress in Sadhana Verses 1-47



6.2 QUALITIES FOR ELIGIBILITY

(Verses 4-9, 6 No.)

THE NEXT SIX VERSES GIVE each one of us an opportunity to measure ourselves on a 'scale' which can tell us where we stand in regard to the eligibility for deep meditation which we have just ended with in the last section. Besides making a personal assessment of our own ability, it would be wise to obtain the opinion of one's spiritual preceptor or Guru. He is undoubtedly the best person to consult on this matter.

This does not mean we should not start meditating until we reach that point of qualification. If we did that, we will probably *never* start meditation – the mind is ever waiting for an excuse to procrastinate this practice, for meditation means 'death' to the mind. We should be regular in our meditation anyway; the qualification comes in glimpses as we practice.

These verses will certainly tell us what our shortcomings are and where to place more effort to make ourselves fully effective in our meditation. We are taken on a self-checking list. Where do we stand on this checklist?

Verse 4: *The 1st & 2nd Milestones*

यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुषज्जते ।
सर्वसङ्कल्पसंन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते ॥ ६-४॥
yadā hi nēndriyārthēṣu na karmasvanuṣajjatē |
sarvasaṅkalpasamnyāsī yōgārūḍhastadōcyatē ॥ 6-4॥

1	<i>Yadaa hi indriyaartheshu,</i>	2nd : When neither to sense objects ,
2	<i>na karmasu anushajjate;</i>	nor to action is a man attached;
3	<i>Sarvasankalpa-sannyaasee,</i>	1st : Having renounced all <u>vain imaginations</u> –
4	<i>yogaaroodha tadaa uchyate.</i>	then he is said to be eligible for meditation.

By now, the accompanying chart must have given us a good visual idea of the various milestones that one crosses to arrive at eligibility for deep meditation. Eligibility for Dhyana Yoga or meditation proper comes when we have reached the 4th milestone (verse 7). In this verse, we are checking ourselves with respect to the 2nd & 1st milestones:

1 2nd Milestone 2a: How is my attachment to sense objects?

2 2nd Milestone 2b: How is my attachment to actions? Is the Ego in the driving seat?

3 1st Milestone: Am I free of all expectation of fruits of my actions? "Vain imaginations" means the fruits of one's actions, which is where we begin Karma Yoga.

There is a reason for the reverse sequence, from higher to lower. It is meant to tell us that if we fall short on any item, then it means that the previous step is not yet mastered.

If even that is not perfected, then we have to go further back to “square one” and correct ourselves with regard to it before continuing higher up.

The 2nd Milestone: This has been split into two parts, namely, objects and actions.

Not going towards the sense objects merely tells us “I have not ACTED”. But that is not the problem. There could still be “I DESIRE to Act”. So one looks deeper within and tackles the problem at the mind level. If the reply from it is “I DO NOT Desire to Act”, it is still not sufficient. When it becomes “I do not even THINK of Desire” then we are safe from attachment to sense objects. Desire is rooted out at the thought level.

The above exercise is to illustrate the depth of self-analysis that is possible. For the purposes of continuing our Sadhana, it is sufficient if we are free from gross sensuality. The disciplined mind stops placing a “pleasure-value” to any object. Nothing outside is given a rating anymore. One learns to view everything without seeing its pleasure-value.

4 These three are necessary but not sufficient conditions to make one a ‘Yoga Roodha’. We need to come to the sufficient condition which includes all other conditions.

We will continue with the assessment in verse 7. In the next two verses we look at an important side issue. As we go deeper into the subject of eligibility, we notice there is one culprit – the MIND – which is the source of all problems. If we can get that right, all else will fit into place. This is what we now take a close look at.

Verse 5 *The Mind as Friend or Enemy*

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।

आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः

॥ ६-५॥

uddharēdātmanātmānam nātmānamavasādayēt |

ātmaiva hyātmanō bandhurātmaiva ripurātmanah |

|| 6-5||

1	<i>Uddharet aatmanaa <u>aatmaanam</u>,</i>	<i>Let a man lift <u>himself</u> by his own mind alone,</i>
2	<i>na <u>aatmaanam</u> avasaadayet;</i>	<i>let him not lower <u>himself</u>;</i>
3	<i>aatmaa eva hi <u>aatmanah</u> bandhuh,</i>	<i>For this mind alone is the friend of <u>oneself</u>,</i>
4	<i>aatmaa eva ripuh <u>aatmanah</u>.</i>	<i>and this mind alone is the enemy of <u>oneself</u>.</i>

For the seeker who is unprepared or not yet eligible for meditation, it is a very hard lesson to learn that it is his own mind that is the cause of all his problems. He finds it impossible to distinguish between the two opposing forces that operate in his mind. The Lord kindly clarifies the situation in this very famous and oft-quoted verse.

All Sadhana Rests in the Mind

1 The main rule is clearly mentioned at the outset: We can lift ourselves, the Jeeva in us, by using our own mind only; there is no other recourse. Other help we may take, but even that eventually points to our mind to make the change.

To lift ourselves, God’s help is there, but it comes to us from within. God is the inner Self within. When our mind is firmly anchored in Him and aspires to be with Him, that mind raises the Jeeva to a higher level of evolution. In fact, some sages consider the mind itself to be the Self when it has been thoroughly purified of all its desires.

NOTE ON THE WORD “ATMAN”

The word ‘**Atman**’ takes on different meanings in different contexts. In this verse it appears seven times. Its meaning as the **Jeeva** or “*individual soul*” occurs in each of the four Padas once, and these are underlined in the box above. The remaining three are shown in bold in the box. The seven meanings are as follows:

- 1a** **Aatmanaa:** “by the mind”;
- 1b** **Aatmaanam:** “the Jeeva”;
- 2** **Aatmaanam:** “the Jeeva”;
- 3a** **Aatmaa:** “the higher mind”;
- 3b** **Aatmanah:** “of the Jeeva”;
- 4a** **Aatmaa:** “the lower mind”.
- 4b** **Aatmanah:** “of the Jeeva”;

2 When our mind is full of desires, it is those desires that drag down our consciousness into worldly concerns. If we do not aspire for God, then the only option for our mind is to seek fulfillment in the desires. Under this condition, the same mind lowers the Jeeva’s evolution; it can take us to the level of animals if we allow it to. Everything hinges on how we use the instrument called mind.

So important is the influence of the mind that one may say all Sadhana takes place in the realm of the mind only. The aim of all Sadhana is to control the restless mind. We see the Lord taking great trouble to ensure that we are not waylaid by our own mind during the practice of meditation. Lord Krishna pinpoints the chief problem area to Arjuna.

Two Opposing Forces in the Mind

In the second half of the verse, we are given the scenario of a “War” situation within our own mind.

3 The higher mind is the aspiring mind. This part of the mind wants to rise higher, it seeks to follow what is good for the Jeeva, and turns towards the Self for direction and guidance. To this higher mind, the Self stands as its Friend. The mind that is in partnership with the Self is the higher mind.

4 The lower mind is the deceptive mind. This part of the mind wants to sink lower, it deludes us to follow the dictates of the mind’s desires, and runs away from the Self outwards through the senses towards the sense objects. To this lower mind, the Self stands as an Enemy! The mind that is in partnership with the senses and their objects, chasing pleasure, is the lower mind.

How the Mind Operates

The operation of this principle can be seen in ordinary life. If a teenager wants to do something that is wrong, he is afraid of his parents, who appear to him to be his enemies. At the office, when workers wish to shirk their duties in order to do something else during working hours, they are very afraid of the boss; the boss becomes their enemy. It is the same with our own mind. The Self appears as an enemy when we want to do something that is willfully wrong. God Himself becomes our enemy!

It is in our interest to ensure that the “higher mind” and not the “lower mind” becomes our partner in running our lives. The three self-tests of the previous verse will

assist us to find the “higher mind” and be on its side. Once it has established itself it can keep an eye on the “lower mind” that will always linger around, waiting for a chance to pounce upon us.

The following graphic gives us an idea of the war taking place in the mind. The Jeeva stands in the centre, being pulled to opposite sides by the two minds, as follows:

SENSUALITY ⇌ “Lower Mind” ⇌ **JEEVA** ⇌ “Higher Mind” ⇌ **THE SELF**

As Acharyaji put it, “We have fallen into the ocean of despicable, piteous, wretched living, lost in Samsara, drowning. Already the situation is bad. Don’t push ourselves further down into the ditch, and destroy ourselves. Let us raise ourselves up. The mind can be made our friend. It is the only instrument we have. Let us use it properly by keeping it on the side of the Lord. No one else can help us here.”

It is for our own good that we see how eligible we are before we begin to meditate in earnest. If we practice meditation with the lower mind, we will be concentrating on sense objects, and energizing them even further. Our situation will get worse.

Verse 6: Two Warring Factions of the Mind

बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः ।

अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत्

॥ ६-६॥

bandhurātmātmanastasya yēnātmaivātmanā jitaḥ |

anātmānastu śatrutvē vartētātmaiva śatruvat

|| 6-6||

1	<i>bandhuh aatmaa <u>aatmanah</u> tasya,</i>	<i>The mind is the friend of <u>oneself</u></i>
2	<i>yena aatmaa eva Aatmanaa jitah;</i>	<i>for him whose mind is conquered by the Self.</i>
3	<i><u>anaatmanah</u> tu shatrutve,</i>	<i>But to <u>the unconquered mind</u>, as an enemy</i>
4	<i>varteta Aatmaa eva shatrutvam.</i>	<i>stands the same Self – like an external foe.</i>

THE WORD “ATMAN”

In this verse the word ‘Atman’ appears six times. Its meaning varies as follows:

1a Aatmaa: “the higher mind”;

1b Aatmanah: “of the Jeeva”;

2a Aatmaa: “mind” in general;

2b Aatmanaa: “by the Self”;

3 Anaatmanah: “to the lower mind”; and

4 Aatmaa: “the Self”.

In this verse we move forward in our understanding of the higher and lower minds. What actually causes the rift in the first place? It is lack of the element of self-discipline which tears our mind apart into two warring factions. This is the theme of this verse.

Acharyaji said, “The spiritual life is a journey by the Alone to the Alone.” All the problems are created within, and all the solutions are to be found within.

Acharyaji drove home the point that it is absolutely crucial to have a well-disciplined mind to make the spiritual journey possible. The true aspirant does not rely on any outside prop. He puts all his effort in controlling or disciplining his own mind, wherein there is a constant war going on. All Sadhana takes place in the mind. It is crucial that we attend to the mind with all the seriousness that it deserves. On this single factor rests all our Sadhana.

The Sadhana of Disciplining the Mind

1-4 The Divine Teacher takes no chances. He is making a thorough check to see that we enter the hall of meditation with 100% eligibility. The lesson of the previous verse is reworded to give more emphasis to the self-discipline that is needed to train the mind.

This verse prompted an inspirational saying from Acharyaji as follows:

“Mind is a good SLAVE, but a bad MASTER.”

Acharyaji gave the following illustration of one who fails to lay down the terms for his own mind. “It is like getting into a car, and telling the car to go where it wants to. Well, it will certainly take you for a ride!” This is what the mind will do if we don’t lay down the rules for it. We should not let loose our own untrained mind against us!

Acharyaji added (probably with tongue in cheek!): “The mind is a *better* enemy than a car without a driver.” As an enemy, the mind has no match!

As a marathon runner prepares himself for months before a race, so too, we need to prepare our mind over a long period before applying it to the task of doing a “Meditation Marathon”! Acharyaji said that in all this preparation, there must always be the glow of cheerfulness on our face. Sadhana has to be done willingly and cheerfully, or not at all, especially the Sadhana of self-discipline.

So far we have dealt with the 1st & 2nd milestones in verses 4-6. Now we move on to the 3rd & 4th milestones. The 4th milestone qualifies us for meditation.

Verse 7: The 3rd & 4th Milestones

जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः ।

शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानापमानयोः

॥ ६-७॥

jitātmanah praśāntasya paramātmā samāhitah |

śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkhēṣu tathā mānāpamānayōḥ

|| 6-7||

1	<i>Jitaatmanah prashaantasya,</i>	4th : Having conquered his mind, he is full of <i>peace</i>
2	<i>paramaatmaa samaahitah;</i>	<i>in the Supreme Self; 3rd : He is balanced</i>
3	<i>sheeta-ushnah sukhah-dukheshu,</i>	<i>in cold and heat, pleasure and pain,</i>
4	<i>tathaa maana-apamaan-ayoh.</i>	<i>as also in honour and dishonour;</i>

We return to our analysis of eligibility for meditation, focussing now on the 3rd and 4th milestones. As in verse 4, the Lord begins with the more difficult 4th milestone and then comes down to the 3rd. If the former is passed, there is no need to check the latter.

YOGA-AAROODHA: Mental Quietude or Silence

1-2 Milestone 4a: *Jitaatmaa* – “Victory over the mind”, also called Samaadhana, the last of the ‘Sixfold Virtues’ in Sadhana Chatushtaya. This is the ultimate in self-control or discipline. When endurance or equipoise is well developed, the aspirant arrives at Jitaatmaa, complete conquest over the mind. The mind now listens to the pure intellect.

Milestone 4b: *Prashaanta*: The Prasad one gets for all his effort in achieving this conquest, is complete “*mental quietude*”. These two are closely related to each other, as mother and child. If one has Jitaatmaa (self-mastery) then alone can one enjoy Prashaanta (supreme peace). As aspirants we need only cultivate self-control, and peace falls upon us as a mantle of its own accord, as its Prasad.

To the man of Quietude, the doors of Dhyana Yoga are open night and day. This is the sufficient condition for eligibility for meditation. All other conditions are included in it.

YOGA-YUKTAH: Equipoise – the Test of Endurance

2 By definition, a test is something that one does *not* expect to happen at a given moment, except of course by training oneself to expect the unexpected. We are okay when things suit us, but let something come along which is not to our taste or liking, and it becomes a test of our mental balance or poise. That is the situation being spoken of here.

Milestone 3: *Samaahitah* – “balance or equipoise”. This is the Yoga-Yuktah stage of development, which we have encountered in verse 5.7 where it occurred in the context of the minimum qualification for a Karma Sannyasin. Verses 5.18-20 gave more details of it.

‘Samaahita’ literally means “*well-placed*”, well-placed with the Lord, i.e. in the Lord’s good books, as it were. This is Acharyaji’s favourite word. [Acharyaji’s former name as a Brahmachari was Samahita Chaitanya.] When we pass through this test successfully, we are said to have obtained our certificate of worthiness to begin meditation, at least at a preliminary level. Such a well-balanced person has detachment in all his dealings with people. This is a key qualification in meditation.

3-4 Like many times before, we see the Teacher in Krishna when he presents three examples of *Samaahitah* in graded sequence of difficulty:

3a i) *Physical Discomfort*: To bear physical discomfort is not too difficult – heat and cold is a typical commonly experienced example.

3b ii) *Mental Discomfort*: Pleasure and pain are experiences pitched at the mental level. They are the universal experiences that come darting at the mind, invited or uninvited. When uninvited, we tend to respond to pleasure with “Oohs” and pain with “Aahs”! If both can be taken equally then alone do we pass the test.

4 iii) *Discomfort to the Ego*: Most difficult of all is to remain balanced at the deeper levels of the intellect where the Ego is king. When experiencing ups and downs in this zone, we generally welcome honour and shun dishonour, as it is too hurtful to our pride and our Ego detests it.

Verse 8: *The Yoga-Yuktah – “Harmonised by Yoga”.*

ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः ।

युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः

॥ ६-८॥

jñānavijñānatṛptātmā kūṭasthō vijitēndriyaḥ |

yukta ityucyate yōgī samaloṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ

॥ 6-8॥

1	<i>Jnana-vijnana-tript-aatmaa,</i>	<i>Who is satisfied with knowledge and wisdom,</i>
2	<i>kootasthah vijita-indriyah;</i>	<i>who remains unchanging, victorious over the senses;</i>
3	<i>Yuktah iti uchyate yogee,</i>	<i>such a Yogi is said to be “harmonized”. To him,</i>
4	<i>sama loshta-ashma-kaanchana.</i>	<i>a clod of earth, a stone and gold are the same;</i>

We now have two verses which elaborate on the **Yoga-Yuktah** state. Earlier we came across this word in its meaning as the Equipoise. There is more to it than just that.

Equipoise & Knowledge

1 That which inspires the Yoga-Yuktah state is knowledge; wisdom is the fruit of knowledge. Jnana specifically refers to the theoretical understanding gained by the intense study of the Shastras. Vijnana is the practical benefit or fruit of Jnana, received by one who puts that Jnana into practice in his life. It is therefore also translated as “wisdom”.

If we take another look at the Diagram, we notice that the Yoga-Yuktah is the seeker who has just received knowledge, i.e. he has passed the Sravana state. It is the knowledge that enables him to develop equipoise. Equipoise does not just fall from the sky.

Equipoise & Constancy

2 The Yoga-Yuktah also has another facet in him which assists greatly in producing the Equipoise we see in him.

Kootastha: An anvil is called ‘koota’. In a blacksmith’s workshop, all the red-hot pieces of iron are hammered on the anvil into different shapes but the anvil does not change its shape at all. Kootastha is therefore used as a symbol for the indestructible Self. The Self does not change at all, but It makes everything else change by Its presence.

Kootasthah represents the quality of constancy. This quality comes to the seeker as a result of the knowledge of the Self which he has received during Sravana. The constancy in which he is anchored is seen as the Equipoise which he manifests. He remains unshaken by the blasts of the opposites. Taking his inspiration from the Self, he becomes the constant factor which is able to bear all the ups and downs that life puts him through.

3 Yuktah: “harmonised”. This is the harmony which manifests in the Karma Yogi when he practices Karma Yoga for a prolonged period. The harmony is a striking characteristic of the Yoga-Yuktah. It is an unmistakable trait in his personality.

With respect to the accompanying chart, we are now able to see the relationship among the four types of seekers at the four milestones, namely, i) the **Sadhaka**, ii) the **Aarurukshah**, iii) the **Yoga-Yuktah** and iv) the **Yoga-Aaroodha**. It is important for the student of the Geeta to grasp the significance of these terms in relation to the stage of development they refer to.

We have been approaching the four milestones from different angles. All the repetition involved in doing so is to our benefit. Repetition of key concepts is built into our scriptures and resembles something of a psychological science to help us remember them.

4 Loshta-Ashma-Kaanchana: “an earth clod, a stone, and gold.” There are three objects in the simile, namely, the lump of earth, a piece of stone or pebble, and a piece of gold. All these three are seen with an equal eye. Acharyaji clarified that it does not mean that the sage does not know their value in the marketplace; it just means that he is not swayed by those values. He remains unmoved when seeing them, knowing fully well their worth in the eyes of the world.

The three items in the simile have a hidden meaning also. They refer to the three Gunas, all of which are transcended by the man of equal vision. Earth represents **Tamas**, stone represents **Rajas**, and gold represents **Sattwa**.

Verse 9: Nine Examples of Sama Buddhi

सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनमध्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु ।

साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते

॥ ६-९॥

suhṛnmitrāryudāsīnamadhyasthadvēṣyabandhuṣu |

sādhushvapi ca pāpēṣu samabuddhirviśiṣyatē

|| 6-9||

1	¹ <i>Suhṛin</i> , ² <i>mitraah</i> , ³ <i>arih</i> , ⁴ <i>udaaseenam</i> ,	In the ¹ <i>good-hearted</i> , in ² <i>friends</i> , in ³ <i>enemies</i> or in the ⁴ <i>indifferent</i> ,
2	⁵ <i>adhyastha</i> , ⁶ <i>dveshya</i> , ⁷ <i>bandhushu</i> ;	in ⁵ <i>neutrals</i> , in ⁶ <i>haters</i> and in ⁷ <i>relatives</i> ;
3	⁸ <i>Saadhushu api cha</i> ⁹ <i>paapeshu</i> ,	In the ⁸ <i>sinless</i> , as well as in the ⁹ <i>sinful</i> –
4	<i>sama buddhih visishyate.</i>	a <i>Mind</i> that is <i>Equal</i> towards these, <u>excels</u> .

The equanimity or Sama Buddhi noted in the last verse is illustrated here with some examples from daily life. This is the “Samatva Buddhi” of Karma Yoga in practice. Such equal vision qualifies one to be called a **Yoga-Yuktah**.

Nine different types of individuals are mentioned in the verse, each one having a unique relationship with the aspirant concerned. One can classify even these nine into three categories – the well-disposed, the neutral and the ill-disposed. But that is not really going to teach us much. In the spirit of this verse, we are to see equality in them as the Yogis do, not more inequality as students do! Nevertheless, here is the students’ contribution, for what it may be worth:

- i) **The Well-Disposed:** the good-hearted, friends, relatives, and the righteous.
- ii) **The Neutrals:** the indifferent, and the neutrals.
- iii) **The Ill-Disposed:** the enemies, haters, and the sinful.

Acharyaji said, “The real key to success in having equanimity lies in seeing the Unreality of this world. If we know that the water in front of us is a mirage, then what difference does it make whether it is a large body of water or just a puddle – both are unreal. It is the same with sense objects and people. If they are all seen as manifestations of the ‘Unreality’ as opposed to the One Reality, then the same feeling arises on seeing any of them, in any quantity. This is equanimity.”

This completes the description of the qualities seen in those who are eligible for meditation. Students will profit greatly by this list in their pursuit of realizing the Self.

The next eight verses give us details as regards the preliminaries of meditation.



LORD GANESHA
The Remover of Obstacles

6.3 PRELIMINARIES TO MEDITATION

(Verses 10-17, 8 No.)

A FACTORY PRODUCES a certain product for the market. The manufacturing process for the product becomes the key that determines the quality and quantity of the product. Profitability depends on optimising the process. Towards this end, every detail along the production line is thoroughly scrutinised and studied to maximize production. Every sub-process is analyzed by expert engineers and the latest technology is applied to obtain the best results. Good management is needed throughout the production line to ensure the highest possible yield and profit at the end, to satisfy all the shareholders.

In the same way, in **Meditation**, too, there are many parameters, each of which has an impact on the end result – good meditation. In this section of 8 verses, the Lord, like a professional Meditation Engineer, takes us through the meditation production line. He teaches us how to optimize each sub-process so that there are minimum obstructions in the whole process, and the final manufactured article is to our satisfaction!

Lord Krishna clears away all the ‘little’ bumps on the way for our benefit as well as His. Our benefit is to have smooth, undisturbed meditation; His benefit is to produce the maximum number of realised saints for this world to be a better place. Then He does not have to come down as an Avatar too often, and can spend more time lying down in the Ocean with His head on His palm, in the company of Mother Lakshmi and guarded by Seshnag, the thousand-hooded serpent! Can we not try and become saints for His sake!

Verse 10: *i) The Mental and Physical Environment*

योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।

एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः

॥ ६-१०॥

yōgī yuñjīta satatamātmānaṁ rahasi sthitah |

ēkākī yatacittātmā nirāśīraparigrahah

|| 6-10||

1	<i>Yogee yunjeeta satatam,</i>	<i>Let the Yogi constantly keep his mind <u>steady</u>,</i>
2	<i>aatmaanam rahasi sthitah;</i>	<i>remaining by himself <u>in solitude</u>;</i>
3	<i>Ekaakee yata-chitta-aatmaa,</i>	<i>Alone, with mind and body <u>controlled</u>,</i>
4	<i>niraashee aparigrahah.</i>	<i>free from <u>anxiety</u> and free from <u>greed</u>.</i>

The first aspect is the **Environment**, both physical and mental.

We notice that the bodily aspect and the mental aspect are treated not only in the same verse but also thoroughly jumbled together so that no distinction is traceable between them. Perhaps this is an immediate lesson that meditation is something that goes well beyond these limited environments. We are moving into a ‘dimensionless space’ within that transcends physical and mental limits.

1 Yunjeeta: This word has the root *Yuj* meaning “to unite”.

It is important to keep in mind the overall objective of the arrangements – *to bring our mind to a steady state*, a state of union with our own Self within. We ought never to forget this. To achieve this end, it is worth paying attention to the following details:

- i) **Rahasi Sthitah: 2** (about place) remaining in solitude;
- ii) **Ekaakee: 3a** (about people) remaining alone;
- iii) **Yata-Chitta-Aatmaa: 3b** (about activities) limiting mental and bodily activities;
- iv) **Niraashee: 4a** (about mind) being free from the anxiety of future results;
- v) **Aparigraha: 4b** (about possessions) being free from greed.

Acharyaji said we should note the concerns (highlighted above) which make us take required actions to overcome the problem.

In different places, circumstances may vary and the same arrangements may not be possible. We must use our intelligence to make the best possible adjustments in this regard. For example, if we cannot find a perfectly quiet place we do not have to stop meditating! We may try and find other means such as using earplugs, and so on, but even if these are not found the meditation should continue. We can choose a quiet time of the day.

Regarding greed and need, Acharyaji gave this practical example: It may be a ‘luxury’ for a Sadhu in Varanasi to require a stainless steel flask for water instead of a conventional earthenware *kamandalu* (water-pot), but the former may be a necessity for a Westerner in Europe. Thus to keep the overall purpose in mind is very essential.

Environments may not always be to our liking. Gurudev Sivananda, for his intense meditation, had no choice but to use an old thatched hut along the Ganges bank. Yearning to meditate overruled all other considerations of comfort.

In the verses to follow, we shall deal with the spot selected, the Asana (or seat), the focus of one’s mind, the steadiness of the body, the will and determination, balance of mind, and extremes and moderation in food and sleep. The Lord Himself guides us!

Verse 11: *ii) The Spot & Seat for Meditation*

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।

नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम्

॥ ६-११॥

śucau dēśē pratiṣṭhāpya sthiramāsanamātmanah |

nātyucchritam nātinīcam cailājīnakusōttaram

|| 6-11||

1	<i>Shuchau deshe pratishthaapya,</i>	<i>On a <u>clean spot</u>, having established</i>
2	<i>sthiram aasanam aatmanah;</i>	<i>a <u>firm seat</u> for oneself –</i>
3	<i>Na ati-ucchhritam, na ati-neechem,</i>	<i>neither too <u>high</u>, nor too <u>low</u>,</i>
4	<i>chaila-ajina-kushah uttaram;</i>	<i>with cloth, skin and grass one over the other;</i>

1-2 We note especially that the **Spot** and the **Seat** used must be “for oneself”, i.e. one’s own. This is not for selfish reasons. One’s own seat should be used daily as the same

vibrations will remain intact. By sitting on someone else's seat, their vibrations will be present and interfere with one's meditation.

Acharyaji quoted a verse which gave a long list of things that are not to be shared with others. One's meditation seat was one among the items – and so were wife and son!

3 “*Not too high or too low*”. The height of the seat is with reference to the dimensions of the room, not the geographical locality, as many of the Rishis used to meditate in caves high up in the mountains, or along the banks of rivers on the plains. The guideline is purely for safety considerations.

There is a story, probably a joke, of a meditator who began to levitate during meditation. After a few such experiences, he went to his Guru for advice as to what he should do to avoid hitting his head on the ceiling of the room. The Guru gave his suggestion: “You should start wearing a helmet!”

4 A point that puzzles some students is that Lord Krishna seems to have reversed the order of the three items used to prepare the seat. The grass certainly has to be placed first and the cloth topmost, not in the order in which the words are written. We have seen this reversal in verses 6.4 and 6.7 when the milestones were put in reverse order. There is a simple, linguistic reason for this:

In Sanskrit, it is usual to write in an order which appears reversed to the English reader. It was usual for us in class to break up a long word combination by starting from the rear and working our way word by word towards the beginning. This is Sanskrit!

Verse 12: *iii) Preparing the Mind & Senses*

तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।

उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये

॥ ६-१२॥

tatraikāgram manah kṛtvā yatacittēndriyakriyaḥ |

upaviśyāsanē yuñjyādyōgamātmaviśuddhayē

|| 6-12||

1	<i>tatra ekaagram manah kṛtvā,</i>	<i>Having made the mind <u>one-pointed</u>,</i>
2	<i>yata chitta indriya kriyah;</i>	<i>one who has <u>controlled</u> the mind and senses;</i>
3	<i>upavishva aasane yunjyat,</i>	<i>being <u>seated</u> on the seat, let him practice</i>
4	<i>yogam aatma-vishuddhaye.</i>	<i>Yoga for the purification of the mind.</i>

Now comes the all-important preparation of the **mind**.

1-2 A vital consideration is that we should not sit for meditation when our mind is disturbed beyond the usually unavoidable amount. We are already talking of one who has a strong enough mind to handle disturbances in life, so here what is meant is any unusually disturbing event of the day which distracts the mind.

“Having the mind and senses under control” implies that one should not try and select a place that is near a kitchen where aromas will be a distraction to the senses, nor a place of evil repute which will be a distraction to the mind. Burning of incense may overcome the first problem to some extent. When sense activity is kept in check, it ensures that Pranayama becomes easy when one sits for meditation.

Verse 14: v) Fixing the Will & Determination

प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः ।

मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत् मत्परः

॥ ६-१४॥

praśāntātmā vigatabhīrbrahmacārivratē sthitaḥ |

manaḥ saṁyamyā maccittō yukta āsīta matparaḥ

|| 6-14||

1	<i>Prashaant-aatmaa vigatabhih,</i>	<i>Serene-minded and fearless,</i>
2	<i>brahmachari vrate sthitaḥ;</i>	<i>Firm in the vow of Brahmacharya (celibacy);</i>
3	<i>manah samyamyā mat-chittah,</i>	<i>having controlled the mind, thinking of Me,</i>
4	<i>yuktah aaseeta matparaah.</i>	<i>balanced, let him sit, having Me as his <u>goal</u>.</i>

Now we come to the central **will**, a power governed by the intellect. We continue with the sentence begun in the previous verse.

The practice of meditation requires greater will-power than we would normally muster up for any other activity. Meditation is not really an activity, but initially the preparations *are* an activity. The application of will power is central to all this activity. Only after all preparations are established firmly, does meditation become spontaneous and free of activity.

1 Serenity of mind and fearlessness are qualities that pertain to the 4th milestone. Until that high state is reached, one requires the application of much will power or effort.

2 The most important item that requires our will power is the practice of celibacy, known as **Brahmacharya**.

BRAHMACHARYA or CELIBACY

There are many commentators who drop the standard demanded by defining Brahmacharya in other ways, excepting celibacy. That contradicts the very purpose of the instruction. The instruction on celibacy is not unusual. For spiritual aspiration such restraint has to be practised as the spiritual effort is not an ordinary effort of the mind. It aims to scale the greatest obstacles, to overcome the most fundamental urges in man, to transcend them and reach a realm that brings eternal Bliss. Thus, spiritual aspiration demands the greatest in personal sacrifice.

Acharyaji spoke quite openly about this subject, since the audience was a select one – students of Vedanta, many of whom were in their twenties and would be considering to take the vow of lifelong Brahmacharya at the end of the Course.

Acharyaji said: “Failure in Brahmacharya can take months to recoup the loss in vitality. Success depends largely on how chaste is our look, how we view people. We should not see the opposite sex as an object of enjoyment. Translations which exclude celibacy when defining Brahmacharya miss the point about the key delusion in life. The fact is that in the spiritual context Brahmacharya means celibacy. Some have even tried to modify the rule to ‘only during meditation’! It is absurd what people will do to sell their books.”

Acharyaji warned us about popular literature on the market which permits indulgence in order to increase readership.

3-4 Mat-chitta, Matpara: Matpara is “reverence for Me”, while Mat-chitta is “cherishing Me”. Both head and heart are to be used in the worship of the Lord.

These two words further weld us to the feet of the Lord in love and surrender. In a practice such as meditation, where one attempts to discover his true Self, an attitude of surrender or submission to the Divine is naturally found to be of great help.

Devotion or Bhakti towards the Lord, in His personal or impersonal aspect, is strongly recommended. Gradually, they progress from the Personal to the Impersonal.

“Thinking of Me” and “having Me as the Goal” are strong statements which advocate taking the Lord in His personal form for worship. Lord Krishna recognizes the value of this Saguna Bhakti as a precursor of Nirguna Bhakti which is the ultimate stage.

Verse 15: vi) “All Systems Go” – Towards the Goal

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी नियतमानसः ।
 शान्तिं निर्वाणपरमां मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥ ६-१५॥
 yuñjannēvaṁ sadātmānaṁ yōgī niyata mānaśaḥ |
 śāntiṁ nirvāṇaparamāṁ matsamsthāmadhigacchati ॥ 6-15॥

1	<i>Yunjan evam sadaa aatmaanam,</i>	<i>Thus always keeping the mind <u>balanced</u>,</i>
2	<i>yogee niyata-maanasah;</i>	<i>the Yogi, with his mind <u>controlled</u>, (attains)</i>
3	<i>shaantim nirvana paramaam,</i>	<i>peace, culminating in the highest state of <u>liberation</u>.</i>
4	<i>mat-samstham adhigacchati.</i>	<i>By <u>abiding in Me</u> (the Self), this is what he attains.</i>

All the instructions on the preparation for meditation have been given. Now what remains is to get down to the actual practice, and reap the results thereof.

1-2 If we obediently follow all the above instructions, we will have the balance of mind and the total control of it. This is all that is needed to succeed in the practice.

3-4 The Lord gives us His assurance of what we will attain if we follow all the above instructions, without twisting a word. We need to prepare ourselves as He has guided us.

The promise of Peace and Liberation is no mean promise from the Lord’s side, nor is it a mean achievement when looked at from our side. The condition is clear – it requires us to follow the rules strictly, *without bending them to suit our fancies*.

There is no ‘secret’ technique or ‘magical’ formula or any ‘special’ Grace, etc, which is what many aspirants constantly anticipate – and never find! The Lord places a full stop on the search for these extraneous charms that besiege the practice of meditation.

Verse 16: vii) Extremes in Food & Sleep

नात्यश्नतस्तु योगोऽस्ति न चैकान्तमनश्नतः ।
 न चातिस्वप्नशीलस्य जाग्रतो नैव चार्जुन ॥ ६-१६॥
 nātyaśnatastu yōgō:'sti na caikāntamaśnataḥ |
 na cātisvapnaśīlasya jāgratō naiva cārjuna ॥ 6-16॥

THE STORY OF BUDDHA

This story well illustrates the rule of being moderate in Sadhana.

Due to excessive austerities, Lord Buddha had become very lean and did not have sufficient energy. He was refusing to eat in his excessive desire for God. While in this state, he overheard a conversation one day, "How do you tune this *veena* (a stringed musical instrument)?" The reply came, "Not too tight, not too loose." The Buddha was receptive enough to have got his answer from that short conversation.

His thought went to food. The thought was picked up by a nearby devotee of God. A little while later, the devotee came by and offered him a delicious meal. This time Buddha did not refuse. He quenched his thirst, had the meal and sat under the Bodhi tree. In due course, he attained enlightenment.



6.4 NIRVIKALPA SAMADHI

(Verses 18-23, 6 No.)

AN INTRODUCTION TO NIRVIKALPA SAMADHI

(from Yoga Sutras)

AS WE PROGRESSED THROUGH Chapter 6 to this point, we find a close correlation between what Patanjali Maharshi describes in his *Yoga Sutras*, and what Sri Krishna has described so far. There are minor points of difference but they are not so important. All eight steps of Patanjali Yoga are included here; some are expanded in the *Geeta* and some are condensed. Up to Savikalpa Samadhi, which is Step 8 in Patanjali Yoga, and which the *Geeta* reaches in verse 15 of this Chapter, there is a fairly good correlation.

Now Acharyaji gave us more details from the *Yoga Sutras* as an introduction to understanding this section on Nirvikalpa Samadhi. According to the *Yoga Sutras*, one's mind may be in any of five distinct states or levels, as follows:

i) **Moodham Bhumi**: the mind is in the grasp of Tamas; overpowered by sleep or sloth, and all the other aspects of Tamas. What is Samadhi? "A good sleep!"

ii) **Kshiptam Bhumi**: there is agitation in the mind and attachment to objects; mind is predominated by Rajas. What is Samadhi? "I don't know; it wasn't even a good dream!"

iii) **Vikshiptam Bhumi**: This is different from Kshiptam, but similar in some ways; it is an improved version of it. Here, too, there is attachment but it is for *meditation* rather than objects. The mental state is like a flame where the wind is blowing – sooner or later the flame gets blown out. What is Samadhi? "O, I felt so calm and relaxed!"

iv) **Ekaagram Bhumi**: This is a state where the mind is free from Rajas and Tamas; it is dominated by Sattwa. It is able to abide in a single thought; there is a prolonged flow of one thought. What is Samadhi? "I experienced something divine, but cannot describe it."

v) **Niruddha Bhumi**: In this state there is complete steadiness. It is also called Asamprajnata Samadhi, and is beyond the Ekaagram state. In Niruddha there is Vishuddha Sattwa (total purity of mind), where the mind is like a lamp in a windless place. What is Samadhi? "O it is a Peace that 'passeth understanding'. I had no mind, not a thought!"

Acharyaji followed this with a classification of **Vairagya**, also based on the *Yoga Sutras*. Vairagya is the Antaranga (internal) Sadhana for Samadhi, hence its importance here. There are two types of Vairagya, namely Param and Aparam, the higher and the lower. The lower is further divided into 4 identifiable states as follows:

Aparam Vairagya

i) **Yatamaam**: One's dispassion is at a fledgling stage. Effort is needed to distinguish Nitya from Anitya, the eternal from the transient, the Real from the unreal.

ii) **Vyatireka**: One comes to have a better understanding of where one stands; one is able to see which attachments he still has and which he has conquered.

iii) **Ekendriya**: This state recognizes that all the objects of pleasure are seeds of sorrow. An attempt is made to give them up, but lingering taste for pleasure remains.

iv) **Vashikaara**: this is the state of conquest of all desire for pleasure. This is the highest stage of Aparam or 'lower' Vairagya. However, it is still in Duality. The sense of individuality has not been totally eliminated. Some effort is still needed to stay in this state.

Param Vairagya

This is beyond Aparam Vairagya, and in particular it is beyond Vashikaara. It is abandonment of the entire external Prapancha (manifested universe), including one's own Upadhis, i.e. one's own body, senses, mind and ego. The Upadhis are included as the world of objects. When this happens, there is no Ego left to desire any pleasure. There is, therefore, an effortless Vairagya. This is the highest state of Dispassion.

This state is irreversible when attained. It is nothing short of what we are going to discuss now – Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Param Vairagya is always from the Non-dual perspective. There is no Duality at all. The greatest joys of the world are transcended. In this state, even Rasaswada, the bliss of Savikalpa Samadhi, is given up. The Antaranga Sadhana needed after reaching Savikalpa Samadhi terminates at this point once Nirvikalpa Samadhi has been attained.

We begin now the description of the sage in Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the state of Perfection. We are now speaking of a state that is beyond all Duality. It is a state of Non-duality, which is found only in the philosophy of Vedanta, the wisdom of the Upanishads of the Vedas. Owing to paucity of language, the description may appear similar to what we have already encountered so far on the way to this state.

Verse 18: *The Attainment of Nirvikalpa Samadhi*

यदा विनियतं चित्तमात्मन्येवावतिष्ठते ।

निःस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यो युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा

॥ ६-१८॥

yadā viniyatam cittamātmanyēvāvatiṣṭhatē |

niḥspṛhaḥ sarvakāmebhyō yukta ityucyate tadā

|| 6-18||

1	<i>Yadaa viniyatam chittam,</i>	<i>When, with the mind <u>perfectly controlled</u>,</i>
2	<i>aatmani eva avatishthate;</i>	<i>one rests in the Self alone,</i>
3	<i>nihspriah sarvakaamebhyah,</i>	<i>free from the <u>longing</u> for all objects of desire,</i>
4	<i>yuktah iti uchyate tadaa.</i>	<i>then it is said that he is "harmonized".</i>

1 The mind is under perfect control. Immediately we see there is a similarity to the Yoga Aaroodha state. In verses 6.3 and 6.4, the term was used in its sense of a *Sadhaka*, one who is striving for perfection. Now it is used in its sense as a *Siddha*, one who has attained perfection. The control of the mind has now been perfected.

2 This description is unique to the Nirvikalpa State. We have not come across this in any preliminary stage. Total abidance in the Self always is a distinctive characteristic of Nirvikalpa Samadhi alone. Whenever we see this description, we can be sure that we are speaking of Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

As an identifying factor for Nirvikalpa Samadhi, Self-abidance is no longer an on and off state. It is always 'On'. There is no more 'going into' and 'coming out of' Samadhi; one is always 'in Samadhi'. One's attitude and outlook are transformed permanently.

3 In the earlier state called *Aarurukshah* (milestone 2), the Sadhaka is described as one who is free from sensuality. Vairagya in that state may be said to be equivalent to Ekendriya (see above Introduction), which is part of Aparam Vairagya.

In Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the Vairagya surpasses that state and becomes Param Vairagya, the highest Vairagya. Not only is there no longing or desire for objects but the state has become effortless and irreversible. It has reached Perfection.

4 Yuktah: We have come across this term also as the Yoga-Yuktah at the 3rd milestone. The same comment as for the Yoga-Aaroodha applies here. Then it was in the sense of a Sadhaka, and now it is in the sense of a Siddha. This time the harmony meant is that of total quietude of the Non-dual type, bestowed upon one only by realising Reality.

One has to note well the point made in this verse. All the three milestones earlier referred to the *Sadhaka*; now they refer to the *Siddha*. We must not get confused over the descriptions of the Sadhaka and the Siddha. The problem is that the *same* language has to be used to describe both states!

Verse 19: *"Lamp in a Windless Place"*

यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता ।

योगिनो यतचित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः

॥ ६-१९॥

yathā dīpō nivātasthō nēṅgatē sōpamā smṛtā |

yōginō yatacittasya yuñjatō yōgamātmanah

|| 6-19||

1	<i>Yathaa deepah nivaatasthah,</i>	<i>"As a lamp placed in a <u>windless place</u></i>
2	<i>na saa upamaa smritaa;</i>	<i>does not flicker" – this is a simile that is used</i>
3	<i>yoginah yata chittasya,</i>	<i>to describe the Yogi of <u>controlled mind</u>,</i>
4	<i>yunjatah yogam aatmanah.</i>	<i>practising the Yoga of the Self.</i>

In this verse we have one of the best similes that describes the sage in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. It is not used for any other state in the scriptures. The simile is unparalleled for its appropriateness and perfect representation of the mind-state of the perfected sage.

1-2 The flame of such a lamp itself conjures up a picture of a sage sitting steadily with body erect, undisturbed by any breeze!

The aspiration or devotion to the Lord is the *oil* that keeps the *flame* of awareness burning. The *windless place* represents the complete absence of any distracting influence on the mind, which protects the flame from even the slightest *flicker* of mental agitation. The mind remains calm, still, steady and silent, absorbed totally in the Self.

The absence of even the least flicker represents *Nischalata* or total Sattwa. There is no Rajas or Tamas in such a sage. Such a flame that does not flicker is also more elongated and gives brighter illumination or *Prakashata*.

3-4 This description is of the sage in *Niruddha Bhumi*, i.e. Nirvikalpa Samadhi. In the Introduction to this section, we mentioned this as the fifth and final state of the mind.

The adept in Yoga is the very image of serenity and surrender to the Lord. Only the Param Vairagi can get into this state. Only the best among the Yogis actually achieve this state of perfection!

SIX DESCRIPTIONS OF NIRVIKALPA SAMADHI

The following three verses describe the state of *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* with a precision that can hardly be surpassed. They accurately represent the condition of the greatest accomplishment on earth. The Padas are numbered continuously for these verses.

Just as at a Printing Exhibition, the 6-colour Heidelberg Web Offset Perfecting Machine would draw the maximum interest among printers worldwide, so too these verses, which give us a picture of the perfect Yogi, draw the maximum interest among the world's meditators. As we read these verses, we may imagine we are at the World Yoga Exhibition held in the snowy regions of the Himalayas, presided over by Lord Shiva Himself!

There are six descriptions of the Nirvikalpa Samadhi state in these 3 verses, two in each verse, and these are numbered 1-6.

Yatra: The word usually means “where”, but in these verses it means “when”.

Verse 20: *The Nirvikalpa Samadhi State – 1 & 2*

यत्रोपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योगसेवया ।

यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तुष्यति

॥ ६-२०॥

yatrōparamatē cittam niruddham yōgasēvayā |

yatra caivātmanātmānam paśyannātmani tuṣyati

|| 6-20||

1	<i>Yatra uparamate chittam,</i>	1. When the mind attains quietude ,
2	<i>niruddham yogasevayaa;</i>	<u>restrained</u> by the practice of Yoga;
3	<i>yatra cha eva aatmanaa aatmaanam,</i>	2. When, seeing the Self by the self,
4	<i>pashyan aatmani tushyati.</i>	one is <u>satisfied</u> in his own Self ;

1. Mental Quietude: **1-2** The stillness of the mind was in the previous verse compared to a lamp in a windless place. Acharyaji now compared the development of mental quietude to a drop of water on a warm stone – it just evaporates away silently, without any fuss or attention. Total cessation of the mind happens like that. It is the first sign of the Nirvikalpa Samadhi state. The word *Nirvikalpa* itself means “without thoughts”.

This is the central purpose of the practice of Yoga. The union with the Divine is, in practical terms, the process of quietening the mind to the point of ceasing all thoughts.

2. Satisfaction in the Self: **3-4** The Jeeva is completely satisfied being in the overwhelming presence of the Self. Acharyaji compared this to a baby who hugs its teddy

bear and contentedly falls off to sleep, still hugging it! This simile blends contentment with matchless security. There is also the much-used simile of the river merging into the ocean and losing all individual identity. This is another aspect of Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Verse 21: The Nirvikalpa Samadhi State – 3 & 4

सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद् बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम् ।

वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः

॥ ६-२१॥

sukhamātyantikam yattad buddhigrāhyamatīndriyam |

vētti yatra na caivāyam sthitaścalati tattvataḥ

॥ 6-21॥

5	<i>Sukham aatyantikam yat tat,</i>	3. That Bliss Infinite which is <u>grasped</u> by the pure intellect, and <u>transcends</u> the senses;
6	<i>buddhi-graahyam ateendriyam;</i>	
7	<i>vetti yatra na cha eva ayam,</i>	4. <u>Knowing</u> That and <u>established</u> in It, it (the 'last thought') never moves from Reality ;
8	<i>sthitah chalati tatvataḥ.</i>	

3. Within Reach, Yet Transcendent

5-6 The Bliss of the Self is infinite, immeasurable, and cannot be quantified. It is not a state stumbled upon by accident or obtained by force. One comes upon it after duly passing Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana. It is a natural process of experiencing one's own true nature. Acharyaji found a delightful way of expressing it: "When Knowledge shakes hands with Practice, knowledge is elevated to Silence and practice to Blissfulness."

When this Bliss is experienced, one may say, "the coffin of the Ego is sealed and nailed." It is the death of Mr Ego. Only the pure intellect remains, hoping to bring back a report. It is the only instrument that reaches it. But it is drowned in Bliss that renders it speechless! The intellect has never known anything like it before. For the first time, it has experienced something that does not come in the form of thoughts. It is dumbfounded to explain the experience.

The intellect usually functions only with thought-material that is gathered through the senses. That is its raw material from which it produces its deductions, conclusions or creations. On this occasion, however, the senses prove to be of no use; they cannot reach the experience; the experience transcends the senses.

4. Frozen to Reality

7-8 What happens when the intellect reaches the Bliss? Nirvikalpa is, by definition, a "thought-free" state. At some point in time, there must have been the 'last thought'. That last thought is what witnesses the immense Bliss of this state, but when it has done so, the memory of it gets frozen, as it were, forever! That last thought, the only witness of the experience, thereafter never moves from the Reality. It gets riveted, as it were, to Reality. It cannot come back to report its findings!

Once the river merges into the ocean, it remains forever as the ocean. It cannot return to the upper regions to tell its story to the water still flowing down. The sage similarly cannot return to worldly existence once he has merged into the Infinite. How is he going to make the report of what he experienced?

Verse 22: *The Nirvikalpa Samadhi State – 5 & 6*

यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।

यस्मिन्स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते

॥ ६-२२॥

yam labdhvā cāparam lābham manyatē nādhikam tataḥ |

yasminsthitō na duḥkhēna guruṇāpi vicālyatē

|| 6-22||

9	<i>Yam labdhvaa cha aparam laabham,</i>	5. Having obtained This, he thinks there is
10	<i>manyate na adhikam tatah;</i>	<i>nothing superior</i> to it worth <u>obtaining</u> ;
11	<i>yasmin sthitah na duhkkena,</i>	6. Wherein established, he is not moved
12	<i>gurunaa api vichaalyate.</i>	even by the <u>heaviest of sorrow</u> ;

5. Nothing Superior

9-10 So, the ‘last thought’ has witnessed the experience but cannot return to report it to us. Who is then thinking that “*Nothing else is superior*”? It is a mystery that beats the most sophisticated legal brains; the C.I.D. is completely baffled.

The experience is probably like this: A salt doll dives into the ocean to discover how deep the ocean is. In doing so, it gets completely dissolved into the ocean, becoming one with it, losing its entire identity – and, of course, never returning to tell its tale!

The point in all this is that where science and legal detectives have failed, poets have come along with their streaks of poetry and attempted to explain in thoughts that which has transcends thought – and they have succeeded!

As it is an experience in Non-duality, there can be nothing else to compare it with. How can there be anything superior to it? Or, anything inferior to it?

Non-duality has yet another facet to it . . . within the pages of the Geeta –

6. Unmoved by Heaviest Sorrow

11-12 Where is sorrow in such a state when one is completely merged with Brahman? Sorrow can exist only in Duality, when there are two or more. This is a non-Dual experience of Reality, where there cannot be anything other than Bliss.

There is another mystic interpretation of this line. Seen from the perspective of this world, we know what sorrows exist. However, there is a Sorrow that is at the root of all the little sorrows we experience. It is the “Sorrow” of simply being thrown into this world with no clue as to why and what for we are here. This endless ‘jungle’ of births and deaths with no end in sight, is the deepest sorrow, the “*heaviest*” sorrow.

The experience of merging in the Universal Self removes this Sorrow once and for all. There is no return to this painful worldly experience anymore, no more rebirth for the one who is merged in the Supreme.

Explaining this ‘state’, Acharyaji quoted verse 5.21 of the *Geeta*:

“The Self, unattached to external contacts, finds happiness in the Self; and engaged in meditation upon Brahman, It attains endless happiness.”

Thus all six facets of the experience of Nirvikalpa Samadhi are reported back to us by the insightful poetry of Sage Vyasa, coming to us as the words of Lord Krishna. We have “known” Nirvikalpa Samadhi from a mental perspective. When the sage opens his eyes just once upon this world, and his consciousness intermingles with human consciousness due to Prarabdha – *our* good Prarabdha – we receive from him a glimpse of the most wondrous experience ever possible in this human birth!

Verse 23: Sri Krishna’s Novel Definition of Yoga

तं विद्याद् दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् ।

स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा

॥ ६-२३॥

taṁ vidyād duḥkhasaṁyogaviyogaṁ yōgasamjñitam |

sa niścayēna yōktavyō yōgō:'nirviṇṇacētasā

|| 6-23||

13	<i>Tam vidyaat duhkha-samyoga-</i>	Let it be known: “The state of <u>disunion</u> from <u>union</u> with
14	<i>viyogam yoga-samjñitam;</i>	all <u>Sorrow</u> ” – that’s the trade-name I give to this Yoga.
15	<i>sah nishchayena yuktavyah,</i>	With <u>determination</u> should be practised this
16	<i>yogah anirvinna-chetasaa.</i>	Yoga, with a mind that is steady and undespering.

Sri Krishna now takes a small break, as it were. When man attempts to *define* the highest spiritual experience, he invariably ends up *defiling* it. Sri Krishna seems to be aware of this, and creates a trade name for His brand of Yoga, enjoying Himself in the process.

13-14: Having just explained in words the inexplicable state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi to a dazed Arjuna, the Lord can afford a small joke: He continues His play of words, producing His classic brand name of the Yoga He has been teaching Arjuna, a name that has never been used hitherto in spiritual literature:

The trade name for Krishna’s Yoga is: **Duhkha Samyogam Viyoga** – “The Yoga of Disunion from the Union With Sorrow”!

The six descriptions in the previous three verses are being copyrighted by Sri Krishna under the above trade name. At the ‘naming ceremony’ Sri Krishna explains the attractive new name:

Generally Yoga means union with something. Here, Sri Krishna looks at Yoga from the angle of what has been left behind, not what has been attained. In such a case, it is not Yoga but **Viyoga**, that is, a disunion. Disunion from what? – From the sorrows that are being left behind. How did the sorrows come into our life? *We united ourselves to them*. So now we are merely reversing that union. That is how the newly-coined term has come about – **Duhkha Samyogam Viyoga**, meaning “The Yoga of Disunion (Viyoga) from the Union with (Samyogam) all Sorrow (Duhkha)” – an amazingly accurate definition!

The real realization is not of the Self, for the Self is always there, nothing new has happened to It. It is the mind that has been cleansed, and de-united from its ignorance and restlessness (Avidya and Vikshepa). Once that disunion has taken place, the union with sorrow dies a natural death.

15-16 Nishchayena: “with determination”. The second half of the verse was paraphrased for us by Acharyaji as:

“This is what I am going to do myself, come what may. I will prepare my mind to be steady, enthusiastic and undespairing. I have to tread this path with enthusiasm. I need to empower myself. There can be no flagging zeal, no despair, no loss of hope once I begin.”

DETERMINATION: STORY OF THE LITTLE SPARROW

Acharyaji told us this very appropriate story about determination:

There was a small sparrow which had built its nest in a hole in the trunk of a tree near the seashore. Unfortunately, one day at high tide on a stormy day, the sea waves dashed onto the tree and the eggs were swept away into the sea.

The mother sparrow was sad, indeed. But it did not lose hope. It stood sad only for a moment on the edge of the water. Then it made a firm determination of what action it was going to take – and set off to carry out its resolve with unflagging zeal. It had decided to empty the ocean of its water so that it may recover its eggs.

With its small beak it began the task it had set for itself – to suck the ocean dry. It would fill its beak with as much water it could carry in its small mouth, then run back to the shore and empty it there, and return for more. It worked tirelessly at this for some days. The other sparrows thought it was rather strange for one of their kind to behave in this manner. They explained to it that she could never get back her eggs; that this was an act of nature, and she has to accept the inevitable. The sparrow simply ignored them and carried on.

Narada was wandering by and saw what was in progress. He decided to come to the sparrow's help. Without saying a word to Mrs Sparrow, he went to Garuda, the king of the birds. He presented the case of the unfortunate bird to the king, and said it was an insult to the bird kingdom that this injustice should be allowed without a challenge. Garuda's pride was aroused. After all, he was king of all the birds. How dare the ocean take away the eggs of one of his subjects?

Thinking in this way, he flew to the seashore and, facing the sea boldly, let forth a thunderous roar. Varuna, the Lord of the Ocean hastened to answer this mighty call from the king of the birds. Thoroughly scared of King Garuda, Varuna did not wish to cause any trouble to himself, and so quickly returned the eggs, to the great pleasure of Mrs Sparrow.

Garuda then went to the sparrow to see for himself that she was satisfied. Mrs Sparrow, innocent of what had actually happened behind the scene, chirped to him, “I think Mr Ocean got quite a fright that I was going to empty all His water, so He brought all my children back. I have taught Him a good lesson not to do that again!” Garuda just smiled.

With great pride and pleasure, Mrs Sparrow clicked her beak and happily got busy attending to her large family once more.



6.5 PROGRESS TO NIRVIKALPA SAMADHI

(Verses 24-28, 5 No.)

Verse 24: *Vairagya – the Sadhana after Knowledge*

सङ्कल्पप्रभवान्कामास्त्यक्त्वा सर्वानशेषतः ।

मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः

॥ ६-२४॥

saṅkalpaprabhavāṅkāmaṁstyaktvā sarvānaśēṣataḥ |

manasaivēndriyagrāmaṁ viniyamya samantataḥ

॥ 6-24॥

1	<i>Samkalpa prabhavaan kaamaan,</i>	<i>Abandoning all desires born of imagination</i>
2	<i>tyaktvaa sarvaan asheshatah;</i>	<i>without reserve;</i>
3	<i>manasaa eva indriya-graamam,</i>	<i>And even completely restraining the whole</i>
4	<i>viniyamya samantata.</i>	<i>group of senses by the mind, from all sides . . .</i>

[Notice that this verse continues in the next verse; it has no verb of its own.]

1-4 The whole verse speaks only of a strong determination to be made by the aspirant to increase his dispassion. He needs to DETACH from the world as much as possible. The more he does so, the more he ATTACHES himself to the Self within. That is the Sadhana.

An interesting point is being driven home by Sri Krishna: Once knowledge of the Self is obtained, the actual progress towards Samadhi lies not in knowledge any longer, but in the degree of **Vairagya**. It is vital to understand this practical point.

The Shastras on Cultivating Vairagya

Two famous examples from the Shastras (scriptures) were given to us by Acharyaji. They are: i) *the crow's droppings*; and ii) *a dog's vomit*. These objects induce disgust in a person. A true Vairagi is expected to view the objects of sensual pleasure in the same way to induce in him Vairagya or dispassion. It is undoubtedly a very hard climb to perfect the state of Vairagya. That is why the Shastras have to resort to examples like these to induce the correct feeling in us.

A poignant statement conveyed by Acharyaji, underlining the above, is this:

***“By clarity of the intellect one enters the halls of Knowledge;
But by dispassion alone does one enter the great Hall of Samadhi.”***

Nothing that the Shastras say can be taken lightly, and nothing She says is intended to *hurt* us. Mother Shashtra (Shruti Mata) is revered for this reason only. She knows the tricks of the human mind better than us, hence She knows better how to deal with the stubborn mind. When it comes down to practice, She needs to be a little “cruel” to be kind!

Without this apparently harsh approach, nothing will push the mind to change its old, set ways. There is no sweet way of treating this subject! Changing the human mentality is a painful operation, and Shruti Mata knows best how to do Her job.

Verse 25: A Gentle Pace, Wins the Race

शनैः शनैरुपरमेद् बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।
आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥ ६-२५॥

śanaiḥ śanairuparamēd buddhyā dhṛtigrhīṭayā |

ātmasaṁsthaṁ manaḥ kṛtvā na kiñcidapi cintayēt || 6-25||

1	<i>Shanaiḥ shanaiḥ uparamet,</i>	<i>Little by little, let him attain quietude;</i>
2	<i>buddhyaa dhṛiti-griheetayaa;</i>	<i>With the intellect held in <u>firmness</u>.</i>
3	<i>aatma-samstham manah kritvaa,</i>	<i>Having made the mind established in the Self</i>
4	<i>na kinchit api chintayet.</i>	<i>let him <u>not think</u> of anything.</i>

1 The practical constraint is that spiritual unfoldment cannot be rushed. It is one of those great movements of Nature that has to follow the pace of Nature – sacredly slow. Evolution towards a higher species than the present Man is Nature’s plan. From a global perspective, that can take many thousands of years. Individually, however, that can be done even in this birth itself, but we must be patient, and go **Shanaiḥ Shanaiḥ**, “little by little”.

The seeker places himself in the hands of the Supreme, and the Supreme does the work with the full co-operation of its Shakti or Power, at the pace of Mother Nature. We have to place our trust in these Divine forces, and not rush them in their task.

An activity like the construction of a road can be hastened by bringing in more resources into it. This is actually how many over-enthusiastic seekers on the spiritual path approach meditation, bringing the contractor’s mentality into it. And suddenly abandon their journey without attaining success. Meditation cannot be treated as an activity.

Pujya Gurudev’s golden advice on this is: “Hasten Slowly!” In his lecture, he would pronounce the English translation as “Seelolee, seelolee!” to give maximum auditory impact to the slowness and patience required.

2 A firm intellect is a sign of **Chitta Ekagrata**, the “one-pointed mind”.

3 A mind established in the Self is a sign of **Chitta Shuddhi**, “purity of mind”.

4 Together, one is able to shut out all thought from the mind for long periods.

Acharyaji’s advice was that even if we cannot go slowly forward, we should never allow ourselves to go backward. Just hang on firmly to our attainment with a sense of perseverance. We must jealously guard ourselves against regress.

He gave a personal example of a climb he did once in the Himalayas. From Gangotri to Gomukh, it is very gentle. Then from Gomukh to Tapovan it gets very steep, nearly 60 degrees climb all the way. Mind control is like that climb – as we get to the higher stages it gets more and more difficult.

There are some self-created problems in mind control. At times the mind starts imagining things. “I had a vision of Shiva!” or “I heard Lord Krishna’s flute!” How does one handle such behaviour of the mind? Acharyaji showed us a way: “Tell the mind, ‘I am the Self alone, not all these other manifestations.’ That way, we can steer clear of vain imaginations. We can also simply consider them as encouragements along the way and then forget about them. We should never let the Ego catch hold of such visions and mystic experiences – the Ego has its own agenda in such matters!”

THE 5-POINT PROGRAMME OF SADHANA

Acharyaji gave us a five-point, step by step method of ensuring progress on the path. Its purpose is to make us aware of the different stages of growth we have to go through. A second purpose is to make us establish ourselves firmly at each level before attempting to move on to the next step. We have to make each stage '*pakka*', before moving ahead. As we attain mastery over each stage, we hold on to it, let it stabilize and then move on to the next stage.

i) ***Vak Bhumi Jaya***: The first rung on the road to mind control is speech control. Everything to do with speech needs to be looked at and placed under surveillance. Speech is mind in manifestation. Through one's speech we know what the mind is thinking.

ii) ***Mano Bhumi Jaya***: This is mind control, a huge subject in itself. The primary consideration is the control of Kartritwa, the feeling that "I" am doing everything. If this point is checked habitually and eliminated, then mind control becomes easy. Mind control does not cease until we eliminate the Ego totally. That is the next point.

iii) ***Ahamkara Bhumi Jaya***: This is Ego elimination. It is a major breakthrough in mind control. It is the 'jugular vein' of the mind. The driving force of the mind comes from the Ego, which is one of the four parts of the inner instrument.

iv) ***Mahat-Tattwa Bhumi Jaya***: This is intellect control, which is also known as the decisive mind. The intellect is what is in charge of the whole inner instrument. At the individual level, it is the Boss of the whole living individual. It can only be controlled by connecting it to the greater intellect beyond it, the Mahat or Cosmic Intellect.

Mahat is the Total Intelligence, beyond one's own intellect and ego. By aligning ourselves to this greater Intelligence, we refine our own intellect and enhance its power to govern the mind and thereby the rest of the human being. Such control eliminates the bulk of the thoughts in the mind, which are created by fear and anxiety, jealousy and envy, anger and lust.

v) ***Shanta Atma***: Finally, when all the thoughts dwindle down to a trickle, we are left with peace and stillness. The mind can be described as being either destroyed or merged into the vast Cosmic Mind, Hiranyagarbha. Egolessness gives the mind great power and purity. The mind in this state gets absorbed in the Self.

Thus the procedure to arrive at quietude is outlined in five systematic steps. One has to go through all of them one after the other. There is no "double promotion".

Verse 26: *Steadying the Restless Mind*

यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम् ।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत्

॥ ६-२६॥

yatō yatō niścarati manaścañcalamasthiram |
tatastatō niyamya itadātmanyēva vaśam nayēt

॥ 6-26॥

1	<i>Yatah yatah nishcharati,</i>	<i>From whatever cause <u>wanders</u> away</i>
2	<i>manah chanchalam asthiram;</i>	<i>the restless and unsteady mind,</i>
3	<i>tatah tatah niyabhya etat,</i>	<i>from that let him <u>restrain</u> it</i>
4	<i>aatmani eva vasham nayet.</i>	<i>and bring it under the control of the Self alone.</i>

The method of training the mind for the Nirvikalpa State continues, aiming to take the Vairagya further, a notch at a time.

1-2 Yatah: “whatever”. There can be umpteen reasons for distracting the mind. It may differ for each Sadhaka. Each person has a unique set of Vasanas or built-in tendencies that get activated under certain conditions.

The usual distractions fall into two major categories: i) drowsiness, when Tamas is predominant; or ii) restlessness, when Rajas predominates. These should not be permitted while we are in meditation (that being the context in this Chapter).

How to Overcome Distractions

3-4 The advice is pitched at a very high level of Sadhana. We are talking of obstacles that arise in a meditator who is striving to establish himself in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. This is not an ordinary Sadhaka, nor are these difficulties ordinary ones.

The common form of resistance to these is to assert that they are all in the realm of the Unreal, and hence they are not part of our real Being. However, each of the two types (the Tamasic and the Rajasic) has to be overcome in its own special way.

i) Drowsiness: In the case of sleep, if it is too difficult to remain awake, it is better to get up, rest if necessary, or wash one’s face with cold water, drink a cup of tea, and then have a proper sitting, this time with more alertness.

Acharyaji had another observation: “Sometimes one feels stuck in extreme Tamas. It is a state called Kashaya. The unmanifest Vasanas act as a barrier. We are not able to tell what is ‘blocking’ our path; the Vasanas are too weak to manifest themselves, yet strong enough to create a sort of ‘invisible’ wall in front of us. We just have to keep on pushing, and eventually it will give way. That is a case when some aggression is needed to clear out the blockage.”

ii) Restlessness: This is the more common and more troublesome distraction that most people have. The clash between personal ambition and the competitive world produces the heat of restlessness in the mind. Stress and tension, worry and anxiety, lust and anger – these are the soldiers engaged in this battlefield called Restlessness.

The ultimate solution, as given in the verse, is to place the mind at the Lord’s feet. By raising the mind higher, one can take it beyond the reach of the mundane obstacles. That is a safe and permanent spiritual solution to the problem. We have to bring the higher Self more and more to our aid. More surrender to the Divine within is needed.

Acharyaji gave us more practical hints to resolve them: “Tell yourself, ‘Shame on you, O mind! Don’t you know how temporary these things are? And still you are running after them! Stop it!’ – in this manner you can check the mind and apply the brakes on it.”

The next two verses take us to the Supreme Bliss of Nirvikalpa Samadhi . . .

Verse 27: Supreme Peace & Bliss in Samadhi

प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम् ।

उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम्

॥ ६-२७॥

praśāntamanasaṁ hyēnaṁ yōginaṁ sukhamuttamam |

upaiti śāntarajasaṁ brahmabhūtamakalmaṣam

|| 6-27||

1	<i>Prashaanta-manasam hi enam,</i>	<i>Verily, a mind filled with peace (comes) to him;</i>
2	<i>yoginam sukham uttamam;</i>	<i>the taste of Supreme Bliss (comes) to the Yogi –</i>
3	<i>upaiti shaantarajasam,</i>	<i>whose <u>passions</u> have been quietened.</i>
4	<i>brahma bhootam akalmasham.</i>	<i>He becomes Brahman who is <u>free from sin</u>.</i>

The effort indicated in the previous verse – “bring it under the control of the Self alone” – is well worth the trouble. The rewards of bringing the mind under control are seen in this verse. At this point, Nirvikalpa Samadhi is just round the corner.

1 A mind filled with peace is one of the results of the culmination of meditation, or Nirvikalpa Samadhi. It is tangible proof of the nature of God. **Supreme Peace** is the first fruit of attaining Nirvikalpa Samadhi as seen from the standpoint of the world.

2 By intention and not accident it is said here that Bliss comes looking for the Yogi, and not that the Yogi has to go in search of the Bliss. The flower does not seek the bee; it is the bee that seeks the flower. The bee of happiness settles naturally on the flower of a peaceful mind. **Supreme Bliss** is the second fruit of Nirvikalpa Samadhi as seen from the absolute standpoint.

What is the critical factor which brings about these two results?

3 To avoid all ambiguity about the cause that brings these fruits, the Lord includes this line. It is the total absence of passions towards any sense objects. Any lurking desire rules out the establishment of this inner state of peace and bliss.

Dispassion is the sign that one should be looking for, and it is within his control. The fruit is not in the seeker’s control; it is a gift from the Divine, which we call Grace. Dispassion, however, is something within the seeker’s control. It depends entirely on the seeker’s effort. One may say, dispassion is the devotee’s grace to God, and Peace and Bliss are God’s Grace to him.

4 Here a third fruit is brought into the scene. It is **Sinlessness**. One who is free from passions, obtains the fruit of becoming sinless. The interconnection between desirelessness and sinlessness is worth looking into. It is desire alone that drives one to commit sin. Desire lies in the seeker’s control; sinlessness is the fruit that comes to him when he does his bit to check all desire. We cannot strive to be sinless, but we certainly can strive to be desireless.

The “Chain of Ascent”

The verse as a whole provides us with a tool to gauge our spiritual growth. The “Chain of Ascent” can be deduced from it. From Dispassion to Supreme Bliss is no mean achievement. To attain universal consciousness, to be one with the whole universe is an amazing achievement! The Lord is promising something very big. We need to derive maximum benefit and inspiration from this verse.

5, 3 **DISPASSION** ⇒ No Doership

6, 4a **SINLESSNESS** ⇒ No Ego-Sense ⇒ Universality

7, 1 **SUPREME PEACE** ⇒ 4b Identity with Brahman

8, 2 **SUPREME BLISS**

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः ।
सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥ ६-२८॥

yuñjannēvaṁ sadātmānaṁ yōgī vigatakalmaṣaḥ |
sukhēna brahmasaṁsparśamatyantam sukhamāśnutē || 6-28||

5	<i>Yunjan enam sadaa aatmaanam</i>	<i>Always <u>engaging</u> his mind thus (in Yoga),</i>
6	<i>yogee vigata-kalmashah;</i>	<i>the Yogi is freed from sins;</i>
3	<i>sukhena brahmas sam-sparsham,</i>	<i>he easily comes in <u>contact with Brahman</u>,</i>
8	<i>atyantam sukham ashnute.</i>	<i>and enjoys the Infinite Supreme Bliss.</i>

CONCLUSION

ii) **Relative Standpoint:** From the point of view of the Unreality, the world that has just been renounced, the experience is one of Liberation – the freedom of having gone beyond all sorrow, the freedom of having never to have to come back to the endless cycle of births and deaths which is Samsara.

* * * * *



6.6 UNDERSTANDING GOD-EXPERIENCE

(Verses 29-32, 4 No.)

NORMALLY OUR EXPERIENCE is “You are you” and “I am I”, and not even by mistake do we ever think otherwise. But in the light of this section we see this is not the absolute Truth. There is a view higher than such an ego-centered, individualistic view. One who has stilled his mind and abides in his deeper Self has access to the higher view.

When the body identity is given up, a different vision comes to light. We do not see others as outside of us. They are viewed as no different from us. This is an expansion of consciousness. It is this expansion that we explore in this section of four verses.

The aim of these verses is to make us grasp what it means to be in a God-realised state. We are also given an insight into what actually makes this state so unique.

THE INDIVIDUAL & THE UNIVERSAL

A distinction is made in Vedanta between the individual and the universal. The former is the Microcosm, termed **Vyashti**; it sees things from the individual’s point of view; it is centred on the word *Twam* or “Thou”. The latter is the Macrocosm, termed **Samashti**; it sees things from the cosmic point of view; it is centred on the word *Tat* or “That”.

Verse 29: *From the Microcosmic Standpoint – “Twam” Pada*

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।

ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः

॥ ६-२९॥

sarvabhūtasthamātmānaṁ sarvabhūtāni cātmani |

īkṣatē yōgayuktātmā sarvatra samadarśanaḥ

|| 6-29||

1	<i>Sarva-bhootastham aatmaanam,</i>	<i>The Self as abiding in all beings,</i>
2	<i>sarva-bhootaani cha aatmani;</i>	<i>and all beings abiding in the Self;</i>
3	<i>eeekshate yoga-yuktaatmaa,</i>	<i>Thus sees the one who is <u>harmonized</u> by Yoga,</i>
4	<i>sarvatra sama-darshanah.</i>	<i>who has equal vision towards all.</i>

Jeeva is Essentially the Self

This verse expresses equal vision from the microcosmic viewpoint. The Self is regarded as the substratum, and all the living beings are the superimposition.

i) 1 *Seeing our Self in all beings*: In this view, one sees himself as being the **Adhishtanam** or substratum of all beings.

ii) 2 *Seeing all beings in oneself*: In this view, one sees all beings in himself as **Adhyastha** or superimpositions upon him.

The point expressed is that “He is Me” and “I am He”. This is the identity hinted at if not directly indicated by this line. Acharyaji said this is a good example of how we have to “unlock” the meaning of the scriptures.

Verse 31: *The Yogi and Lord are One!*

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।

सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते

॥ ६-३१॥

sarvabhūtasthitaṁ yō māṁ bhajatyēkatvamāsthitaḥ |

sarvathā vartamānō:'pi sa yōgī mayi vartatē

॥ 6-31॥

1	<i>Sarva-bhootasthitam yah maam,</i>	He who worships Me as abiding <u>in all</u>
2	<i>bhajati ekatvam aasthitah;</i>	<u>beings</u> , being established in <u>unity</u> ,
3	<i>sarvathaa vartamaanah api,</i>	whatever be his <u>mode of living</u> ,
4	<i>sah yogee mayi vartate.</i>	such a Yogi abides in Me .

The bitter medicine which a child refuses to take, is gulped down easily when the mother adds a little sugar to it! In this verse, Jnana has merged with Bhakti. With a little re-phrasing of the previous verse, the Lord is able to enrich the meaning of the same idea. The knowledge content is the same, but the sugar content of Bhakti has been increased!

Knowing God appears as a dry fact in comparison to the intimate relationship of worshipping God. The Lord, as he concludes one-third of the Geeta on the theme of Karma, is paving the way for the next third – He is ushering in **Bhakti Yoga**.

1-2 Oneness is the Knowledge; worship with that vision of Oneness is Devotion. There is a swift and smooth transition from one to the other. The beauty is that Bhakti is not brought in as a replacement for knowledge, but as an *enhancement* to it. Nothing is being discarded; only sweetness is being added!

When the meditator merges his identity with that of the Beloved Lord, he does not talk in the dry terms of knowledge alone, but infuses his vision with the strong bonds of love and devotion for the Lord. “Seeing the Self in all” has simply been replaced with “worshipping God in all”.

Divine Love Has No Barriers

3 It matters not who the devotee is, what his background is, what his family lineage is, what caste he belongs to, etc. Nothing bars a devotee from claiming his birthright of a place in the heart of the Lord.

These words are addressed to Arjuna. He was a soldier and killing was his profession. If he can be acceptable to the Lord, what to speak of any other profession or situation that may appear undignified or demeaning in the eyes of ignorant men?

4 The Lord, as the Infinite Consciousness, does not turn away anyone who surrenders himself totally to Him. All can claim their rightful place in His heart. All who knock on His door, are welcome to enter.

The words “*such a Yogi abides in Me*” shows how the Lord reciprocates the worship of the devotee.

In any communication, the intention is always the most important element. In the case when the individual merges his identity with the Lord, can we ever imagine what must be the impact of this on his feelings and words? How pregnant would his feelings become, how expressive his words, at such a moment of divine happiness!

God-Experience can only be understood with the heart, not with the mind. This verse is just the beginning of that message, of which we are going to see a lot more in the Geeta.

Verse 32: *Who is the Highest Yogi?*

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।
सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ ६-३२॥
ātmaupamyēna sarvatra samam paśyati yō:'rjuna |
sukham vā yadi vā duḥkham sa yōgī paramō mataḥ ॥ 6-32॥

1	<i>Aatmaupamyena sarvatra,</i>	<i>Through the likeness of the Self everywhere,</i>
2	<i>samam pashyati yah arjuna;</i>	<i>he who sees with Equanimity, O Arjuna,</i>
3	<i>sukham vaa yadi duhkham,</i>	<i>be it in pleasure or in pain,</i>
4	<i>sah yogee paramah matah.</i>	<i>he is regarded as the highest Yogi.</i>

This verse has a trend seen in all human ventures. At the end of the year at school, we have an Awards Day for the best students. At the end of the football season, we have the “Footballer of the Year” Award. Filmstars have their “Oscar Awards”. Lord Krishna seems to know the ways of men and follows the same trend – at the end of the Yogi’s quest, He gives him the “**Highest Yogi**” award!

Whom does the Lord consider to be the greatest Yogi? In our chart showing the Desire Scale and the milestones in Yoga, who stands at the apex of the scale?

1 The answer is the one who sees the Self everywhere, in all beings. This is only possible at the 5th milestone, which is Self-realisation.

2-3 However, the eligibility for this journey to realization begins with the **Yoga-Yuktah** in the 3rd milestone, where Equanimity is the criterion. In Chapter 5 we saw that it was at this point that Karma Sannyasa begins. The serious part of spiritual seeking begins at this milestone.

4 The award is thus generously given by the Lord to all who are able to reach at least this stage. Seekers reaching this stage will be balanced and poised enough whether they are recognised with an award or not! So they are the ones that deserve Sri Krishna’s Award. Such a person, in the eyes of the Lord, is worthy of the title of “Greatest Yogi”.

“Greatest Yogi” in terms of Milestones and Bhumikas:

For very keen students, this class discussion on the milestones and Bhumikas surrounding the “Greatest Yogi” may be useful. The accompanying chart will assist.

Three significant, *consecutive* milestones of growth in an aspirant are:

i) **Tattwa Jnana:** (2nd milestone, *Aarurukshah*) This marks the understanding of Vedantic Truth through Sravana. Implicit in this milestone is Sadhana Chatusthaya and some degree of dispassion for sense pleasure so that the knowledge can be grasped.

ii) **Mano Nasha**: (3rd milestone, *Yoga-Yuktah*) This marks the stage when one's thoughts are well under control. Implicit in this stage is a greater growth of Vairagya that enables the seeker to be equipoised and balanced in mind under all conditions.

iii) **Vasana Kshaya**: (4th milestone, *Yoga Aaroodhah*) This marks the stage when even the deep-seated desires lurking in the subconscious mind are rooted out to a large extent. Vairagya is taken up to the highest notch. Implied here is stillness of mind which enables abidance in the Self for long hours.

[Bhumikas are discussed in *Viveka Choodamani* under v400, Text 11 (Vol.3); and in the *Yoga Vasishtha*, Text 21.] The seven Bhumikas connect to the milestones as follows:

<u>The Sadhaka</u>	is at the 1 st Bhumika;
<u>Tattwa Jnana</u>	is at the 2 nd Bhumika;
<u>Mano Nasha</u>	is at the 3 rd Bhumika;
<u>Vasana Kshaya</u>	is at the 4 th Bhumika;
<u>Savikalpa Samadhi</u>	is at the 5 th and 6 th Bhumikas; and
<u>Nirvikalpa Samadhi</u>	is at the 7th Bhumika.

Each of these has to be practised serially, one after the other, as each stage is mastered. They have a *Kaarya-Kaarana Sambandha* i.e. a cause-effect relationship. Saints advise us to give importance to all three in our Sadhana, but more importance to the one related to one's stage of growth.



6.7 ARJUNA ON EQUANIMITY

(Verses 33-36, 4 No.)

THE TEACHING ON MEDITATION has been completed in the last section. In the next two sections of the chapter, the Lord answers two pressing questions from Arjuna. The first of these, concerns the practice of the quality of **Equanimity**. Arjuna seems to be throwing up his hands here, unable to see how it is possible to practice it, seeing that the mind is by its very nature so restless.

To be sure, many 'Arjunas' today will be interested in Sri Krishna's reply . . .

Verse 33: *Arjuna's Opinion – "Sorry, Not for Me"*

अर्जुन उवाच ।

योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन ।

एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात्स्थितिं स्थिराम्

॥ ६-३३॥

arjuna uvāca |

yō:'yam yōgastvayā prōktaḥ sāmyēna madhusūdana |

ētasyāhaṁ na paśyāmi cañcalatvāsthitim sthirām

|| 6-33||

	<i>Arjuna Uvaacha</i>	<i>Arjuna said:</i>
1	<i>Yah ayam yogah tvayaa proktah,</i>	<i>This which is taught by Thee – the Yoga</i>
2	<i>saamyena madhusudana;</i>	<i>of Equanimity – O slayer of Madhu,</i>
3	<i>etasya aham na pashyaami,</i>	<i>I do not see its</i>
4	<i>chanchalatvaat sthitim sthiraam.</i>	<i>steady continuity due to restlessness of my mind.</i>

1-2 We have seen that Arjuna is a very good listener, so he must have understood what Sri Krishna has been telling him about Equanimity, in 5.18-20, as well in the last few verses which specially focussed on the topic. With all that, he is not convinced that such a superhuman control is possible – he just does not have the 'equipment' for it.

Acharyaji summed up Arjuna's feeling in these words: "This is all very well, Krishna, but it just seems to me to be a Utopian dream. I think it is just wishful thinking. It's a good idea, but I am sorry, I don't think this is for me."

Can we imagine how deflated a teacher would feel when his student responds like this? Most teachers would give up on such students, or reprimand them, or fling a hard object at them, despairing of their lack of conviction or self-belief. But Sri Krishna does nothing of the kind. He waits till the student has had his say. In a way, Sri Krishna is putting into practice His own teaching on Equanimity in His response to Arjuna – He remains an attentive listener, unruffled by Arjuna's opinion.

3-4 How is it possible for one to have such a high state of equipoise, where nothing can disturb him? Surely such a thing is impossible in practice. A human being is not a stone! Arjuna, feeling hopelessly disqualified, puts himself “out of the running.”

Verse 34: Arjuna Writes Himself Off

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद् दृढम् ।
तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥ ६-३४॥
cañcalam hi manah kṛṣṇa pramāthi balavad dṛḍham |
tasyāham nigrahaṁ manye vāyōriva suduṣkaram ॥ 6-34॥

1	<i>Chanchalam hi manah Krishna,</i>	<i>Restless indeed is the mind, O Krishna,</i>
2	<i>pramaathi balavat dridham;</i>	<i>turbulent, strong and unyielding;</i>
3	<i>tasya aham nigraham manye,</i>	<i>I deem its control</i>
4	<i>vaayoh iva sudushkaram.</i>	<i>as difficult as the control of the wind!</i>

1 Chanchalam: “restlessness”. The word features for a second time in consecutive Padas. Its very sound smacks of restlessness. It is the key word in Arjuna’s resistance. Typical of one who wants to push forth a biased opinion, Arjuna does not consider any other factors. He is carried away by his fear of having to bring his mind under control.

The Boulders Strewn Across Arjuna’s Path

2 Arjuna’s imagination now plays havoc with him. It was fair for him to place his concern to Sri Krishna, but now he goes to the extreme of justifying his stand. He himself now places three huge boulders in his way – the boulders of fearful words showing how difficult it is to control the mind. The three boulders are **Pramaathi**, **Balavat** and **Dridham** – “turbulent, strong and unyielding”. They are usually reserved for exceptional difficulties.

Acharyaji probably had some bad experience with an elephant; his examples showed it. He said: “**Pramaathi** means ‘very turbulent’, like an elephant going into a small straw hut and sneezing inside it! Or, like an elephant stalking a banana plantation. **Dridham** means ‘unyielding’, as when an elephant is in season, it goes mad and nothing can control it. In such a state the elephant becomes **Balavat**, gaining more ‘strength’ and more viciousness.”

Is Arjuna being realistic? Can the mind really be compared to these examples? A great fear seems to have overcome Arjuna – the fear of disciplining his own mind.

“Uncontrollable as the Wind”!

3-4 As though what he said is not sufficient, Arjuna now adds more spice to it. He brings to his support the powerful, fantastic simile of uncontrollable wind. True, wind is uncontrollable. Even a small wind can bring down the curtains, or topple a few chairs in the house. What to speak of gale-force tornados or typhoons! A typhoon, tsunami, hurricane, earthquake – no one has found an answer to taming these.

Here is a case where the simile seems to be dictating the original thought. Arjuna is caught totally in the grip of justification. Bias is written all over his argument. It is not Arjuna’s intellect that is posing this opinion; it is his MIND.

Is the mind really like the wind? Arjuna is too afraid to ask that question.

There is the common psychological truth – no mind in the world will like to see itself get destroyed. That is Arjuna’s fear. To him, taming the mind means robbing it of its very existence. Any reason to escape this will do. That is the disease which the Lord is now compelled to treat.

It is this over-exaggeration on the part of Arjuna that would surely deflate any teacher – but not Sri Krishna! This Guru will never give up even if the disciple shows signs of panic. Arjuna has just poured cold water on Sri Krishna, but this is how the Lord responds:

Verse 35: *The Lord’s Wise Reply*

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
 असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम् ।
 अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥ ६-३५॥

śrībhagavānuvāca |
 asaṁśayaṁ mahābāhō manō durnigrahaṁ calam |
 abhyāsēna tu kauntēya vairāgyeṇa ca grhyatē ॥ 6-35॥

	<i>Shree Bhagavaan Uvaacha</i>	<i>The Blessed Lord said:</i>
1	<i>Asamshayam mahaabaaho,</i>	<i>Undoubtedly, O mighty-armed,</i>
2	<i>manah durnigraham chalam;</i>	<i>the mind is difficult to <u>control</u> and restless;</i>
3	<i>abhyaasena tu kaunteya,</i>	<i>But by practice indeed, O son of Kunti,</i>
4	<i>vairaagyena cha grihyate.</i>	<i>and dispassion, it can be <u>restrained</u>.</i>

1-2 Firstly, when someone says that a thing is impossible, the wise teacher never immediately contradicts him. Instead, Sri Krishna actually seems to agree with him. “Yes, you are right, indeed it is very difficult to control.” Then He adds, “But so what? You are a hero in facing challenges. You are exceptional. I know your capabilities on the battlefield. It cannot be impossible for one like you!”

Sri Krishna does not even countenance a retreat from his disciple at this stage. The first thing he does is change Arjuna’s ‘Chanchalam’ to just ‘**Chalam**’, a masterstroke of Vyasa’s poetry. With that, He takes the “wind” out of Arjuna’s argument. Just by reducing the word by 50%, He has reduced the boulders to a tenth of their size!

This is the Lord arguing, and He excels Arjuna in the art: “Arjuna, it may be difficult, but it is not impossible. Here are two ways in which you can succeed over the mind.”

Two Names for Arjuna

Before dealing with the two methods of Sri Krishna, we deal with the two names that Sri Krishna uses to address Arjuna in this verse – **Mahaabaho** and **Kaunteya**. Using two names is in itself significant – it tells Arjuna how important this verse could be to him if he listens to it carefully. It could turn his whole life around from being a ‘Zero’ to a ‘Hero’.

The first name appeals to Arjuna’s own strength to face difficulties, for it means “O mighty-armed”. The second word appeals to his lineage, for it pays a tribute to Queen Kunti, who never yielded to difficulties. She was inundated with difficulties all her life, yet she

asked for more difficulties so that she could remember Sri Krishna more often! That should be inspiring enough to an Arjuna who seems unwilling even to try this experiment.

Abhyasa and Vairagya – the Two Methods:

Now Acharyaji stepped up his own role as a teacher *par excellence*. We could feel it in every word he uttered, in every breath he took. He places himself in Sri Krishna's shoes:

3 Method 1 – Abhyasa: “Arjuna, have you ever tried to practice a bit of mind control? How can you run it down so much without even trying?

“Look at how ballet-dancers succeed, just by never giving up on their practice. **Abhyasa** or practice makes anyone perfect. It is like breaking a stone – you try ninety-nine times and you fail, but the hundredth blow splits the rock. More Abhyasa will convert the two pieces of rock into a heap of sand! People have practised and succeeded to rotate a plate on their little finger! Why are you just dismissing it without even trying? Just give it a try and see a miracle happening to you.

“Only the Lord can be so charmingly convincing in the face of a stubborn wall of resistance. He showed not the least sign of despair. On the contrary He rose to the occasion and met fire with a *volcano* of persuasion.”

Archaryaji took a few breaths before continuing.

4 Method 2 – Vairagya: The second method aims to deprive the mind of its ‘food’ – the sense objects and the enjoyment the mind derives from them, which makes it restless.

“Starve the senses to control the mind – that is the philosophy. And it is a perfectly sensible thing to do, however difficult it may appear. The alternate is utter ruin, for no one has ever satiated his appetite for enjoyment. Trying to do so simply saps away all energy from a person. It makes sense to curtail the outgoing mind through *Vairagya* or Dispassion.”

By such persistence, Sri Krishna shows the true Guru in Him, always having the good of the disciple at heart, even when the disciple seems to have given up all hope. Truly, the love of a Guru is boundless and totally unselfish. There is no comparison to it.

Verse 36: The Only Condition for Success

असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप इति मे मतिः ।

वश्यात्मना तु यतता शक्योऽवाप्तुमुपायतः

॥ ६-३६॥

asam̐yatātmanā yōgō duṣprāpa iti mē matiḥ |

vaśyātmanā tu yatatā śakyō:'vāptumupāyataḥ

|| 6-36||

1	Asamyat aatmanaa yogah,	By a man of uncontrolled self, Yoga
2	dushpraapah iti me matiḥ;	is very hard to attain; this is also My opinion.
3	vashih aatmanaa tu yatataa,	But by the self-controlled , striving one,
4	shakyah avaaptum upaayatah.	it is possible to obtain , by the proper means.

Sri Krishna, being the perfect Teacher, places before Arjuna in an impassionate manner both the options available to the seeker. They are diametrically opposite each other. This is a sign of a good, unbiased teacher – he lets the student choose.

i) **1-2 Asamyat:** If the mind is “uncontrolled”, then yes, Arjuna is right – for it is impossible to attain equanimity with such a mind. And Sri Krishna agrees fully with Arjuna’s assessment of such a mind, by saying, “Yes, that is also My opinion.”

But that is not the only possibility. There is a case for the opposite to happen as well.

ii) **3-4 Vashih:** The “self-controlled” one, on the other hand, by exercising control over his mind, actually becomes a master of it, instead of remaining a bonded slave to it. For the spiritual seeker – and, of course, Sri Krishna naturally expects to place Arjuna in this category – effort can turn the scenario around and make the impossible possible. There is no need to throw up one’s hands in despair as Arjuna has done.

The Hata & Krama Methods:

4 Once the aspirant can muster sufficient self-confidence to make a start to control his mind, then the only thing that remains for him to know is the **Upaayatah**, “the proper means” to achieve his purpose. There is the Hata method of suddenly ‘stopping’ the mind; and there is the Krama method of going step by step.

i) **The Hata Method:** This method is doomed to failure as it does not take into account the nature of the mind. This is Sri Krishna’s considered opinion.

ii) **The Krama Method:** This method is what Sri Krishna has just suggested to Arjuna. It uses **Vairagya** and **Abhyasa** in combination with each other. If sincerely tried, this method cannot fail. The Lord Himself will support the effort as one makes it!

The method has two Steps:

Step 1: By **Vairagya** or dispassion one puts a stop to all wastage of one’s precious energies. It is like building a dam across a river and holding back the water.

However, to simply dam the water is very dangerous; it is equivalent to suppression. There has to be a suitable, safe method of releasing the water for constructive purposes. The same is done in spiritual Sadhana: after damming the energy through Vairagya, it is carefully channelled into useful, constructive Karma Yoga activities. The energy has to be used up well, if not there will be the danger of it bursting through the dam and causing terrible destruction downstream.

Step 2: Vairagya has to be followed by **Abhyasa** as step 2 in order to well regulate the energy or Rajasic element within man. Step 1 alone, telling the mind “No, not this”, is not sufficient. It merely disengages the mind from harmful entanglements. It has to be followed by step 2, of engaging the mind in some useful service activities that will also purify the mind of its accumulated dirt.

In this way, where a teacher of ordinary skills would have long given up on his stubborn student, the Lord shows His great skill and wins the situation for his student. Arjuna is saved from being wrecked before even setting sail, thanks to the timeous and wise intervention of his Divine Master.



6.8 THE YOGA-BRASHTHA

(Verses 37-45, 9 No.)

FOR THE NEXT NINE verses Lord Krishna has a most absorbing discussion with Arjuna on how the spiritual Sadhana continues into one's next birth should one fail to reach the goal in this birth. It is made clear that no gains made are lost when we die.

The type of birth taken, and the opportunities presented therein make for a very enlightening study, and generate great hope in us to persist in our spiritual life.

Verse 37: *The Yoga-Brashtha – “Fallen” from Yoga*

अर्जुन उवाच ।

अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतो योगाच्चलितमानसः ।

अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति

॥ ६-३७॥

arjuna uvāca |

ayatiḥ śraddhayōpētō yōgāccalitamānasaḥ |

aprāpya yōgasamsiddhiṁ kām gatiṁ kṛṣṇa gacchati

|| 6-37||

	<i>Arjuna Uvaacha</i>	<i>Arjuna said:</i>
1	<i>Ayatih shraddhayaa upetah,</i>	<i>Unable to <u>control</u> himself, though having faith,</i>
2	<i>yogaat chalita-maanasa;</i>	<i>whose mind <u>wanders away</u> from Yoga,</i>
3	<i>apraapya yoga-sam-siddhim,</i>	<i>not having attained <u>perfection</u> in Yoga –</i>
4	<i>kaam gatis Krishna gacchhati.</i>	<i>to what end does he go, O Krishna?</i>

Who is Arjuna Speaking About?

The first task for the student is to ascertain who is the person Arjuna is speaking about. Later, in verse 6.41 Sri Krishna introduces the term **Yoga-Brashtha** for this person. We will start using the term at once to simplify the text.

The question is: Who is this Yoga-Brashtha? If we go to our Desire Scale Diagram and look at the different milestones, is he the *Sadhaka*, *Aarurukshah*, *Karma Sannyasi* or *Yoga-Yuktah*, *Yoga-Aaroodhah* or the *Dhyaani*, or is it someone other than these? To find out we go to the Bhumika scale of spiritual attainment shown in the same Diagram.

The Clues

Firstly, we summarise what clues are given in the verse as to who he could be:

1a Ayatih: Although this word loosely translates as “unable to control himself”, Acharyaji prefers to translate it as “one who has not put in sufficient effort”. In other words, it is not a negative statement of criticism, but a positive statement, made of a good, sincere

person who is trying his best but who just has not been up to the mark in his efforts. Hence, he has not been able to make the final ascent in Yoga.

1b Shraddhayaa: The person also has the basic qualities of a Sadhaka. This word stands for all the qualities which it heads, namely the Shad Sampati, and this implies that he is well-founded in Sadhana Chatustaya. This is how a scripture has to be read – all things related are to be taken into account to open up the meaning.

2 Chalita-Maanasa: That he wavers from Yoga indicates that he is one who is trying for some time to attain the concentration level needed to stabilize himself in abiding in the Self. This indicates that he is already practising Nididhyasana, but has not perfected himself, i.e. he is a beginner in meditation.

Such is the person Arjuna is asking about. So who could such an aspirant be in terms of the list given at the outset? What Bhumika can we assign to him based on these clues? Let us examine these clues and try to plot the Yoga-Brashtha on the Bhumika Scale.

It cannot be the *Yoga-Aaroodhah*, who has already attained the Savikalpa Samadhi state and is very close to the goal. That rules out the 4th Bhumika upwards. It cannot be the *Aarurukshah* (2nd Bhumika) who is the one still climbing up in spiritual life, and not yet eligible for meditation. These clues indicate someone who is in the **3rd Bhumika** (the *Yoga-Yuktah*), where the person is practising meditation, and has Savikalpa Samadhi as his immediate next step.

By deduction in this manner, we conclude that the Yoga-Brashtha is the Yoga-Yuktah, the *Karma Sannyasi*, the full-time aspirant who has no other activities to draw away his attention. Or, he could be the *advanced Karma Yogi* who qualifies to switch to Karma Sannyasa, but decides not to. The important point is that Arjuna is referring to a fairly committed aspirant, not a dull one, nor one with a luke-warm interest in spirituality.

Yoga-Brashtha literally means “one who has fallen from Yoga” (verse 6.41). For this reason a misunderstanding has crept in. Some commentators deduce from this word that it must be someone who has committed a misdeed and perhaps disgraced himself. There is no logical ground to make such a deduction at all; it is a complete misunderstanding of Arjuna’s question. The Yoga-Brashtha is, as we have carefully deduced, one who has reached the 3rd Bhumika, but simply could not reach the goal, for reasons that will be made clear shortly.

Verse 38: The Classic Simile of “Rent Cloud”

कच्चिन्नोभयविभ्रष्टश्छिन्नाभ्रमिव नश्यति ।
अप्रतिष्ठो महाबाहो विमूढो ब्रह्मणः पथि

॥ ६-३८॥

kaccinnōbhayavibhraṣṭaśchinnābhramiva naśyati |
apratīṣṭhō mahābāhō vimūḍhō brahmaṇaḥ pathi

|| 6-38||

1	<i>Kacchit na ubhaya-vibhrashtah,</i>	<i>Fallen from both, does he not</i>
2	<i>chhinnam abhram iva nashyati;</i>	<i>perish like a <u>rent cloud</u> –</i>
3	<i>apratishthah mahaabaaho,</i>	<i><u>supportless</u>, O mighty-Armed,</i>
4	<i>vimoodhah brahmanah pathi.</i>	<i>and <u>deluded</u> – in the path of Brahman?</i>

Arjuna, not knowing the answer, puts forward a hypothesis of his own in this verse. And he does so through a brilliant simile. All credit to Sage Vyasa's fertile imagination.

1 "*Fallen from both*" – This is the third clue. We get some idea of the nature of the "fall". It cannot be a moral lapse, nor some indulgence in sensuality. For, if that were so, the solution to that would be to face the Karmic consequences of such forbidden actions, as any other person would who does wrong. However, there is not even a hint of such a scenario in the discussion that follows. This confirms that our deduction in the last verse is correct.

From Arjuna's choice of simile, we also get a fourth clue as to who the Yoga-Brashtha could be. A "rent cloud" is one that breaks away from a known cloud and attempts to venture to join an unknown cloud. This is the clearest clue yet that we are speaking about a Karma Sannyasin, and it suggests strongly that it is a Sannyasin. Thus, "fallen from both" means that he has left his home circle and is living as a free Sannyasin engaged in spiritual Sadhana, perhaps yet to join a small circle of Sannyasins or realised sages.

2 As regarding the fate of such a person, Arjuna brings in his magnificent simile to illustrate his point – the "*Rent Cloud*" simile:

The "Rent-Cloud" Simile

3-4 Acharyaji explained this simile in great graphic detail: There are two large dark clouds in the sky. A portion from the trailing cloud breaks away as a 'cloudlet' and moves towards the leading cloud. It overestimates its chances of reaching the leading cloud. On the way it fizzles out and disappears, to be forgotten forever, in spite of the good intention it had of merging with the cloud ahead. Not being part of either the trailing or the leading cloud, it can be thought of as an utter failure. It attains neither the fruit of the more progressive cloud nor can it return to the cloud it left. It attains nothing, being just a forgotten entity.

We simply have to pause to appreciate such a superb simile!

THE ASTRONAUT SIMILE

A modern equivalent of the above simile would be the case of an astronaut. An astronaut, once he has lifted off, is like the 'rent cloud'. He goes with the hope of returning back to earth, his only safety. The moment he lifts off, he is like a flying kite, the thread of which is held in the hands of others. If anything goes wrong on his travels in space, he becomes a "*Space-Brashtha*" in the sense that Arjuna sees the situation – he is lost forever!

These two similes perfectly describe the situation as Arjuna presumes it to be. The Yogi has left the safety of one group (his family circle) and has not had enough time to reach the safety of the target group (the camp of the Self-realised sages). His life appears to have gone in vain. "What is his fate?" Arjuna asks.

We have not congratulated Arjuna for putting forward such a brilliant question. It is indeed a stunning question and Sri Krishna will feel very proud of having a student as attentive as Arjuna. We have also not yet asked, "What is making Arjuna ask this question?"

The next verse tells us his real motive, and we will be surprised to know what has motivated Arjuna to ask the question. The answer will send a thrill of pride down our spine!

Verse 39: Arjuna – On the Brink of Commitment

एतन्मे संशयं कृष्ण छेतुमर्हस्यशेषतः ।

त्वदन्यः संशयस्यास्य चेत्ता न ह्युपपद्यते

॥ ६-३९॥

ētanmē saṁśayaṁ kṛṣṇa chēttumarhasyaśēṣataḥ |

tvadanyaḥ saṁśayasyāśya chēttā na hyupapadyatē

|| 6-39||

1	<i>Etat me samshayam Krishna,</i>	<i>This doubt of mine, O Krishna,</i>
2	<i>chhettum arhasi asheshatah;</i>	<i>please do Thou <u>dispel</u> completely;</i>
3	<i>tvat anyah samshayasya asya,</i>	<i>For, other than You, there is <u>none</u></i>
4	<i>chhettaa na hi upapadyate.</i>	<i>who is <u>capable</u> of dispelling this doubt.</i>

This third verse of Arjuna’s question is a fitting one to find out what is prompting him to ask this question. It tells us why the clearing of this doubt is so important to him, and why he is almost demanding an answer from Sri Krishna. The tone of this verse provides the reader an insight into Arjuna’s motive.

One gets the feeling that Arjuna is on the verge of making a huge decision in his life, and needs just to clear this nagging doubt before taking the plunge into the Unknown.

1-2 From the last conversation with Sri Krishna about Equanimity, Arjuna realizes there is no escape from actually developing Vairagya and practising control of the mind. If he has to undertake this path, he has to leave behind the “cloud” he is presently attached to and make bold to join the more advanced cloud further up. Arjuna is weighing the possibility of him reaching or not reaching his goal in this lifetime – perhaps even anticipating being killed in the war, for the war is now become impossible for him to avoid.

Does that mean that all his effort, his moral rectitude, his sacrifice for the sake of righteousness – would all that just be wasted?

Arjuna is also perhaps asking if there is such a thing as a safety net on this journey to the Unknown. What happens to him if he gets stranded in mid-air? Is there still a way of finding some security on either side? It is a genuine concern when viewed from Arjuna’s shoes. Can he trust his wings to take him through to the end?

The Lord Alone Can Answer This

3-4 Arjuna pins all his hopes on Sri Krishna for an answer. He surrenders utterly to Him, for His answer is going to determine the course of his entire future.

Only his Master, Sri Krishna, can answer this question to his satisfaction. Only Sri Krishna has the credentials to venture an informed answer to this question. Only Sri Krishna has the patience, the care, the deep love and the understanding to dispel this doubt once and for all. Only Sri Krishna will take the responsibility fully on His shoulders for His disciple’s decision based on His answer.

Arjuna stands at the crossroads. The lights have turned green, and he can feel his Destiny pulling him forward. Only Sri Krishna’s answer will tell him whether to turn right or left, or press the pedal and go straight ahead into uncharted territory. It is a “Do or die” situation for Arjuna.

Verse 40: Arjuna is Reassured

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।
पार्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते ।
न हि कल्याणकृत्कश्चिद् दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥ ६-४०॥
śrībhagavānuvāca |
pārtha naivēha nāmutra vināśastasya vidyatē |
na hi kalyāṇakṛtkaścid durgatiṁ tāta gacchati ॥ 6-40॥

	<i>Shree Bhagavaan Uvaacha</i>	<i>The Blessed Lord said:</i>
1	<i>Paartha, na eva iha na amutra,</i>	<i>O Partha, neither <u>here</u> nor in the <u>next world</u></i>
2	<i>vinaashah tasya vidyate;</i>	<i>is there destruction for him;</i>
3	<i>na hi kalyaana-krit kaschit</i>	<i>none verily who strives to <u>do good</u>,</i>
4	<i>durgatim taata gacchhati.</i>	<i>O My son, ever comes to <u>grief</u>.</i>

1 & 4 Paartha, Taata: The first point to note is that the Lord addresses Arjuna in two endearing terms. For a start that means this is a crucial verse in the Geeta. The Lord's reply could make or break Arjuna.

Secondly, the terms mean the 'son of Kunti' and His 'own son', which is valid now since He has been given the role of Master by Arjuna the disciple.

Iha: "In this world" – he will not be forgotten as a lost cause. People will always speak well of such a sincere seeker who did his best to live up to the higher ideal in life. No one will criticize such a person. They will in fact cherish his memory. He had done nothing to be ashamed of. He stood as an ideal for others to emulate.

Amutra: "In the other world" – there in heaven, too, he has no problems. His good, pure life will have earned him enough Punya or merit to deserve a good period there. What happens thereafter is told in the next two verses.

2 Sri Krishna gives Arjuna the assurance that a seeker has nothing to worry about. He will not go into oblivion, nor will all his efforts go in vain. Arjuna need not be concerned about any waste of effort, or any harm coming to him.

Reassurance is the theme of the opening verse of Sri Krishna's reply. Arjuna would certainly have heaved a sigh of relief.

3 Kalyana-krit – in some regional languages this means "one who is married" – most unthinkable to Arjuna on the brink of war! The contextual meaning is "one who is pure, of auspicious conduct, and who stands against the low tendencies of the mind."

Arjuna was not in need of having his morality being certified, but the Lord gives it very generously.

4 There is a personal blessing and an assurance at the end. The Lord's choice of words, His loving concern, His understanding of the situation and the psychology of Arjuna – everything is just perfect. The first round has been executed to perfection.

TWO TYPES OF YOGA-BRASHTHAS

Before proceeding further, Acharyaji gave us a preview of what is to follow. In the verses ahead, the Lord will be speaking of two distinct types of Yoga-Brashthas, as follows:

i) **Type 1:** The seeker who has some deeply seated Vasanas which need more time to clear away. This seeker is a bit short on Vairagya and/or self-effort. He would be someone who would plot between the 1st the 2nd Bhumika.

ii) **Type 2:** The seeker who is either an advanced Karma Yogi or a Sannyasi, who has all it needs to reach the goal, but who just could not make it, either due to an early death, or due to some unfavourable circumstance surrounding his life situation. There is no flaw in this type's level of dispassion. He would be someone who would plot between the 3rd or 4th Bhumika.

These two Types are dealt with separately by Lord Krishna in the next two verses, 41 and 42, and again later in verses 44 and 45, when Lord Krishna deals with the circumstances of the rebirth gained by each type.

Verse 41: *Type 1 – Good Human Birth Guaranteed*

प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः ।

शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते

॥ ६-४१॥

prāpya puṇyakṛtāṃ lōkānuṣitvā śāśvatīḥ samāḥ |

śucīnāṃ śrīmatāṃ gēhē yōgabhraṣṭō:'bhijāyatē

|| 6-41||

1	<i>Praapya punya-kritaam lokaan,</i>	<i>Having attained to the <u>world of the righteous</u></i>
2	<i>ushitvaa shaashvateeh samaah;</i>	<i>and having dwelt there for <u>everlasting years</u>,</i>
3	<i>shuchinaam shreemataam gehe,</i>	<i>in the house of the <u>pure</u> and of the <u>wealthy</u>,</i>
4	<i>yogabrashtah abhijaayate.</i>	<i>is born he that had '<u>fallen from Yoga</u>'.</i>

Praapya Punya: “those who have earned merits”; the person implied is the Type 1 Yoga-Brashtha, who still has traces of desire which need to be fulfilled.

1-2 Thus after death he goes to the heavenly worlds where these desires may be fulfilled. The duration there would vary in accordance with the merit earned.

3-4 When he has exhausted his Vasanas or merit there, he is reborn again on earth. If he still has some more of those Vasanas, then he gets born in an appropriate home where money will not be a problem to deny him anything. He can fulfill his desires.

However, the verse also says that the birth will be in a pure home, where good values and culture are appreciated and fostered. That will enable the Yoga-Brashtha to get the proper early training and set him up on the spiritual path once more.

This is for the Type 1 person, in whom, as Acharyaji put it, “Vasanas are burping”, and need to be satisfied before he can proceed further on the spiritual path.

Verse 42: ***Type 2 – Birth Among the Yogis or Jnanis***

अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम् ।

एतद्धि दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीदृशम्

॥ ६-४२॥

athavā yōgināmēva kulē bhavati dhīmatām |

ētaddhi durlabhataram lōkē janma yadīdṛśam

|| 6-42||

1	<i>Athavaa yoginaam eva,</i>	<i>Or, even in the <u>family of Yogis</u>,</i>
2	<i>kule bhavati dheemataam;</i>	<i>or in the <u>family of the wise</u>, he is born;</i>
3	<i>etat hi durlabhataram,</i>	<i>Verily, it is <u>very difficult</u></i>
4	<i>loke janma yat eedrisham.</i>	<i>to get a birth like this in this world.</i>

Yoginaam: From the fact that the birth is in a “family of Yogis”, we may deduce that the Type 2 Yoga-Brashtha is being referred to. This person had all the qualities necessary to go the whole distance to the goal, but some misfortune denied him the opportunity.

1-2 For this type, since Vasanas are not the problem, he does not have to go to the heavens and waste his time there, for that is not what he wanted in life. Heavenly pleasures are just as binding to man as pleasures on earth. He has already understood that. Further, he is not desirous of comforts also, and for this reason, no mention about a wealthy home is made. Wealth is not needed for this Yogi who has no worldly desires.

3-4 What he does need is a home which would place him as quickly as possible onto the spiritual path. A family steeped in knowledge and wisdom is ideal for this person, or it may be a family of practising Yogis, upholding the highest goal in life. Spirituality is the primary objective of such families. Or it could even be a family facing dire poverty, so that this will stir up the old Samskaras of dispassion early in life, and give a spiritual turn to life naturally.

Such a birth is very, very difficult to get. One reason is that in such families, getting children is not a priority, and secondly there are very few such yearning souls on earth, sincerely involved in spiritual practice.

As we have born artists, music prodigies or maths prodigies, so too, these Yoga-Brashthas become “Yoga Prodigies” who start very early in life to practise Sadhana! Such were the great Sri Shankaracharya, Jnaneshwarji, Swami Sivanandaji, and Swami Chinmayanandaji, among others.

Acharyaji quoted the case of Sri Jnaneshwar’s father who, early in his marriage, decided to quit the householder’s life and take Sannyasa. When his Guru came to know of it, quite by accident, he chided him and sent him back to fulfill all his Grihasthashram responsibilities to his wife. It was then that four divine souls were born to him: Jnaneshwar, Nivrittinath, Sopan, and Muktabai. All four of them became enlightened beings. These are rare cases indeed.

Thus we see the clear distinction between the two Types of Yoga-Brashthas. Their needs are different as their Vasanas and Mumukshutwa (yearning) are different.

Verse 43: *Type 2 – the Journey Continues as Before*

तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभते पौर्वदेहिकम् ।

यतते च ततो भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन

॥ ६-४३॥

tatra taṃ buddhisamyōgaṃ labhatē paurvadēhikam |

yatatē ca tatō bhūyah saṃsiddhau kurunandana

|| 6-43||

1	<i>Tatra tam buddhi-samyogam,</i>	<i>There he comes to be united with the knowledge</i>
2	<i>labhate paurvadehikam;</i>	<i>that he acquired in his <u>former body</u>,</i>
3	<i>yatate cha tatah bhooya,</i>	<i>and <u>strives</u> more than before</i>
4	<i>samsiddhau kurunandana.</i>	<i>for perfection, O Son of the Kurus.</i>

We are still speaking of the Type 2 Yoga-Brashta. More is clarified about his birth.

1-2 In the new birth that is taken by the Yoga-Brashta, he continues from where he left off in the previous birth. Whatever he knew about scriptures and Sadhana then, he picks up now in a short space of time, early in his life, so that there is no delay in his development.

3 The positive message from the Lord is that the seeker who had fallen short of the goal in his last birth, now pays greater attention to his spiritual Sadhana, and tries more than ever before to make progress. Having come into contact with the knowledge once again, he now takes it up in all earnestness, and strives for perfection.

Now, in a new body he has the energy to strive hard. All dullness is washed away. His body is capable of greater effort, his mind is fresh and uncluttered.

4 Kurunandana, “the son of the Kurus”. In the context of this verse, it is significant. Why does Sri Krishna address Arjuna in terms of the clan he is born into? There is probably a hint here of Arjuna’s spiritual destiny that prompted him to ask this question. Is his journey also continuing from where he left off in his last birth?

It may well be; his life is certainly taking the turns that are in Sri Krishna's reply.

Reading in between this particular line gives one the feeling that Sri Krishna is really saying to Arjuna, “Arjuna, *YOU* are one of those Yoga-Brashthas! How do you think you have come to Me so easily in this birth, and at such a good age. Please think – you have got that birth which I have just spoken about, the one that is very hard to get, a birth in a noble family with great love for Dharma. You have a righteous cause to fight for. In this birth you just have to make a little more effort; press on a little harder this time!”

The next two verses, 44 and 45, describe the Phala or result that awaits each of these two types of Yoga-Brashtas.

Verse 44: Type 1 – *The Power of Grace & Knowledge*

पूर्वाभ्यासेन तेनैव ह्रियते ह्यवशोऽपि सः ।

जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मातिवर्तते

॥ ४४-३ ॥

pūrvābhyāsēna tēnaiva hriyatē hyavaśō:'pi sah |

jijñāsurapi yōgasya śabdabrahmātivartatē

|| 6-44||

1	<i>Poorva abhyaasena tena eva,</i>	<i>Verily, by that very <u>former practice</u></i>
2	<i>hriyate hi avashah api sah;</i>	<i>he is borne on in spite of himself.</i>
3	<i>jijnaasuh api yogasya,</i>	<i>Even he who merely wishes to <u>know Yoga</u></i>
4	<i>shabda brahma ativartate.</i>	<i>goes beyond the Shabda-Brahman.</i>

The Lord has only encouraging words to say to Arjuna. That is once again the mark of a great Teacher. They must have come as great encouragements to Arjuna. The words “inspite of himself” and “merely wishes” indicate that this verse is describing the Type 1 Yogabrahtha. In keeping with what we said at the end of the last verse, Arjuna was probably a Yoga-Brashtha falling into this category.

1-2 This seeker, having exhausted much of his Vasanas since his last period on earth, is now in a better position to strengthen his resolve to pursue Sadhana in this new birth. His previously-formed good Vasanas will now pull him, force him to get onto the spiritual path. Without much effort, he can now continue increasing his Sadhana and move forward.

Even though the ‘Bhoga Samskaras’ (tendency to enjoy pleasures) may be large in number, the ‘Jnana Samskaras’ are stronger and more powerful. The Mahabharata war itself is a simile for this situation: The Kauravas, like the Bhoga Samskaras, were greater in number, but the Pandavas, like the Jnana Samskaras, were stronger. And with Sri Krishna on their side, they were invincible.

In this way, Sri Krishna brings out the power of good over evil despite a numerical disadvantage. The Type 1 Yoga-Brashtha is borne on in spite of himself. Let alone others being unable to stop him, he cannot stop himself!

The Power of Grace & Knowledge

3-4 Even the one who had only a casual interest in spiritual matters, who just desired to know a little bit about the path, and who had not made any effort yet to establish himself on the path in his previous birth, he too gets swept away to higher levels in the new birth. Such is the push that God favours him with for having taken even that little interest the last time round.

The Lord uses the simile to show us how the **Wind of God’s Grace** and Guru’s Grace play their part in taking the seeker forward mysteriously in spite of his own weaknesses.

In verse 34, we saw Arjuna bring up the simile of the unfavourable wind to illustrate the restless nature of the mind, and how impossible it is to control it. Now, Sri Krishna uses the same simile in its opposite sense as a favourable wind as though in answer to that argument of Arjuna. Arjuna’s “wind” made everything impossible; but Sri Krishna’s “Wind of Grace” makes anything possible!

Here again, Sage Vyasa’s enormous poetic skill scores yet another victory.

The force of Delusion may no doubt be very great in immersing us into the sea of worldliness, but Sri Krishna here is telling us, “Yes, that may be so, but know for certain that the force of Knowledge is an even greater force in Man. Its luminosity alone can eliminate the thick darkness of Delusion once and for all.”

Verse 45: Type 2 – The One Who Strives Hard

प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु योगी संशुद्धकिल्बिषः ।

अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम्

॥ ६-४५॥

prayatnādyatamānastu yōgī saṁśuddhakilbiṣaḥ |

anēkajanmasaṁsiddhastatō yāti parām gatim

|| 6-45||

1	<i>Prayatnaat yatamaanah tu,</i>	<i>But, he who strives with <u>assiduity</u>,</i>
2	<i>yogee sam-shuddha kilbishah;</i>	<i>that Yogi is completely <u>purified</u> from all sins.</i>
3	<i>aneka janma sam-siddhah,</i>	<i>And, (gradually) perfected through many births,</i>
4	<i>tatah yatih paraam gatim.</i>	<i>he eventually reaches the highest goal.</i>

Now the Type 2 seeker: What to speak of him who does not have the burden of Vasanas to pierce through as has Type 1 seeker? How much more smooth-sailing will spiritual life be for him! Sri Krishna is almost ecstatic as he delivers this verse. If the Type 1 Yoga-Brashtha above is blown forward by the “Wind of Grace”, the Type 2 candidate is being physically lifted and carried by that Wind to fulfil his destiny!

Striving With Assiduity

1-2 We have already seen that this Type 2 person was well on his way in his last birth; he was already striving on the path. What words of encouragement are needed for such a soul? He is being described here as a Yogi already! He already knows the “business” of Sadhana. He surges forward by leaps and bounds, purifying himself thoroughly. It is as though he remembers all that he had done before.

Samshuddhi Kilbishah: This literally means “*purified dirt*”, but because that phrase does not sound very good in English, it has been translated as “purified from all sins”. The Rishis regarded sin as merely *dirt*. A dip in the Ganges is sufficient to wash it away. Things unreal are not to be given too much importance. The Rishis are the Real positive thinkers, to whom knowing the Reality alone mattered. Sins appeared to them as skin-deep only.

The Spiral Route to Perfection

3-4 The *spiritual* path is a “spiral” path, each cycle of birth taking one a little higher up towards realization. Eventually there comes the long-awaited ‘Final Birth’ when the Yogi, having perfected himself bit by bit over many births, adds the final touch to his efforts and realizes the Supreme Self, the “highest goal”.

The optimistic approach that Perfection is the goal and that somehow all of us will get there eventually is asserted in these words of Sri Krishna. There is no theory of “eternal damnation” in Vedanta. We cannot help but go forward only. This is the Plan of Nature for mankind. Our evolution is inevitable. Man, as we know, is a temporary development, working towards evolving further into Divinity some day.



6.9 A GLIMPSE INTO DEVOTION

(Verses 46-47, 2 No.)

SRI KRISHNA'S SPIRITUAL message for the development of the Sadhaka spans the first six Discourses, and is called the **“Twam” Pada** of the Geeta. This entire portion relates to the Sadhana by which the **JEEVA** or individual soul makes spiritual progress from the beginning to the culmination of spiritual life. Its essential purpose was to explain all the intricacies involved in the path of **KARMA YOGA, the Path of Action**. This is now concluded in verse 46 with a parting message from the Lord which presents all the four milestones covered by the Sadhaka along the journey.

The last verse, verse 47, introduces us to the next Phase of the Geeta which will run from Chapter 7 to Chapter 12. It comprises the second major portion of the Geeta entitled **“Tat” Pada**. It is essentially on the glory of **ISHWARA**, the Creator. It will explain all about the various manifestations and glories of the Lord in the vast universe created by Ishwara. Its essential purpose is to take us along the path of **BHAKTI YOGA, the Path of Devotion**.

Verse 46: *“Arjuna, Strive to Be a Yogi!”*

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।

कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन

॥ ६-४६॥

tapasvibhyō:'dhikō yōgī jñānibhyō:'pi matō:'dhikah |

karmibhyaścādhikō yōgī tasmādyōgī bhavārjuna

|| 6-46||

1	<i>Tapasvibhyah adhikah yogee,</i>	<i>The Yogi is thought to be superior to ascetics,</i>
2	<i>jnaanibhyah api matah adhikah;</i>	<i>and even superior to men of knowledge,</i>
3	<i>karmibhyah cha adhikah yogee,</i>	<i>he is also superior to men of action;</i>
4	<i>tasmaat yogee bhava arjuna.</i>	<i>therefore, strive to <u>be a Yogi</u>, O Arjuna.</i>

SIDDHA YOGI	M'STN 5	Stithaprajna	<i>Perfection, steady wisdom</i>	Nirvik. Samadhi
DHYANI YOGI	M'STN 4	Yoga-Aaroodhah	<i>Asceticism, Meditation</i>	Nididhyasana
SANNYASIN	M'STN 3	Yoga-Yuktah	<i>Self- Enquiry</i>	Manana
BHAKTA YOGI	M'STN 2	Aarurukshah	<i>Knowledge & Devotion</i>	Sravana
KARMA YOGI	M'STN 1	Sadhaka	<i>Selfless service</i>	Sadhana Chat.



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 **KAPWING**

ॐ तत्सदिति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु
ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे
आत्मसंयमयोगो नाम षष्ठोऽध्यायः ॥ ६॥

ॐ tatsaditi śrīmadbhagavadgītāsūpaniṣatsu
brahmavidyāyāṁ yōgaśāstrē śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvādē
ātmasaṁyamayōgō nāma ṣaṣṭhō:'dhyāyaḥ ॥ 6॥

Om Tat Sat!

END OF DISCOURSE 6

"YOGA OF SELF-ABIDANCE"

