

Synopsis

This lesson is an introduction to a formal understanding of *dhyāna*. Patañjali yoga *sūtras* don't mention meditation. The word there is *dhyāna* and should be maintained as a technical term.

Example of water in vessel and water in the ocean is used. In a vessel, water remains as it is. Ocean will have tides, tsunamis, glories and riches. All these are a part of the ocean. Likewise, *dhyāna* is the ocean and meditation is a small phenomenon in the ocean of *dhyāna*. *Dhyāna* is like open architecture.

When mind is in disarray, meditation is not possible but *dhyāna* is.

When we are able to lift the mind from a sub-stacy, unsteady, bizzare state it can be *dhyāna*. It can be talking to someone, listening to a particular voice, voice plus content matter, even a thought; all of this can also mitigate turbulence of the mind. That is one kind of *dhyāna*.

Kleśas may not torment but *kleśa vṛttis* can. They vex and torment. We can be explosive, get burnt, parched. So any measure that is taken to mitigate manage or lessen it, is fit to be called *dhyāna*. But not those measures which are not acceptable to yoga like alcohol. So, to lift the mind from sub-normal to normal state, certain acceptable measures are qualified and available.

Taking mind from normal plane to higher plane is also another kind of *dhyāna*. It will sublimate the mind. Could be a piece of music, a perception, a thought, an interaction with a revered person, etc. Patañjali *sūtra*, 'Yathā abhimata dhyānātvā'.

Dhyāna is not a qualification. It is an imperative.

Dhyāna is a must. Something within us needs a form of *dhyāna*.

No qualifications are required and there is no measure of success of failure in *dhyāna*.

Dhyāna is imperative for a human being, to be a good human being.

When hunger and thirst needs to be satisfied, we eat anything that is edible. Likewise, when tormented, everyone needs some type of *dhyāna*. Not any specific kind of *dhyāna*.

Namaskar.

Welcome to new session. In the 11th session, we just touched upon, it was an enunciation to this session actually. I referred to *dhyāna*. So, let's try to have a more formal understanding about *dhyāna*. Not just information but more formal understanding.

Basically, I have been telling you that meditation is not *dhyāna* and *dhyāna* is not meditation. Meditation term does not come in *yogasūtras* or science of yoga. The word has been *dhyāna*. And *dhyāna* must be retained as *dhyāna* and should be considered as a technical term and one should not venture into translating it into the word such as meditation now. And of course we saw the process of meditation.

So the chemical analysis will show that there is no difference between the water that you have picked up in a vessel and water in the ocean. The properties will be one and the same. However, there is a big difference. In your vessel, you will never get high tide and low tide. In a vessel, you will never get tsunami. How so ever you penetrate in the vessel, you will not find any glories. Whereas out in the ocean, there are lots of glories in the ocean. That is why ocean is called *Ratnakar*. *Ratna* means jewels, valuable stones, pearls, diamonds. So, in ocean you can find all that. In the ocean water, you can feel the waves, you can see the waves, the high tide waves, low tide waves, bubbles, foam; you will not find all that in the water that you have collected in a vessel. So, there is a big difference. A vessel is after all a vessel. So also, in case of ocean, the waves are oceanic; bubbles, foam, whatever is the phenomenon on the surface of the ocean is also ocean. Ocean has all that. They don't have ocean. Ocean contains them. They don't contain ocean. They are part of ocean but they don't contain ocean. Similarly, *dhyāna* is like ocean. Meditation is one of the phenomenon in the ocean. One of the many many phenomenon in the ocean. Therefore, we should never equate meditation with *dhyāna*. It is a technical term which should be retained as *dhyāna*. And finally, I will say meditation is just a part of it. As much as the vessel full of water is part of ocean; ocean

has infinite water and the vessel has a finite quantity of water. Similarly, is the case of *dhyāna* and meditation.

So, in the formal understanding of the subject, we should not venture to conveniently use the term meditation for *dhyāna*.

4:40

***Dhyāna* is an open architecture, it's a liberal term.**

We have seen the meditation, just now as I said, meditation needs calibre, qualification, deservations. That is not the case of *dhyāna*. *Dhyāna* is an open architecture. In the 10th session I gave you an example, *dhyāna* comes to describe the personal deity. I gave the example of Rama Raksha, then I told you about Vishnu *Sahasranāma*, then Rudra Prashna where you get something as *dhyāna*. When you open the *stavana*¹ of any personal deity, you will invariably get a *dhyāna*. And in the two verses that we chant for Patañjali, I told you the second verse is *dhyāna śloka* because it describes Patañjali on which we are supposed to have *dhyāna* or what you call as meditation on that figure which is described. So there also the word *dhyāna* comes.

In vernacular, the *dhyāna* also comes for advertence. Like in English, we get this expression, "please listen carefully", "listen attentively", "listen advertently", "attention please" is what the expression in English and many other languages. Whereas in vernacular, the word *dhyāna* comes there. "*Dhyāna sē sunō*" means carefully listen, intently listen, diligently listen, advertently listen. So *dhyāna* comes there as well.

Do we lack qualification to be listening something carefully, listening something advertently? More or less, all of us are qualified. Not that every one is equally qualified, but more or less, we are all qualified to listen carefully, listen intently, listen advertently. All those predicates are also expressed in vernacular by the word *dhyāna*. Like as I said the example in Hindi, "*dhyāna sē sunō*." In English we never say, "Meditatively hear." Because then that is not within the qualification of everyone - to go to meditation and then listen. But *dhyāna* is such a liberal term, it is such a liberal notion, idea, concept. That it can come for act such as advertently hearing, thinking intently, diligently, advertently: *dhyāna purvak*² *vichara*³. It is just that you need an involvement. You must

1 A hymn (<https://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/stavana#sanskrit>)

2 *Purvak* = predominantly. <https://www.gkexams.com/>

3 *Vichāra* (Sanskrit: विचार) means deliberation; its root is वि (prefix to verbs and nouns it expresses) – चर् (to move, roam, obtain knowledge of).

shun all your digressions. You must have focus. That is also *dhyāna*. That is not meditation. Meditation does not come there. It is not a liberal term. If you look into lexicons, it is not a liberal term at all. It is a very very conservative term. Whereas *dhyāna* is not that. Therefore, I am repetitively telling you that we should not venture to use the English word for *dhyāna*. *Dhyāna* has several several connotations. It is liberal, it has an open architecture.

So, one meaning we saw, that you are hearing something advertently, intently, diligently, shunning all digressions. Even a thought process like that to whatever extent possible. When you are having a thought process with some focus then that will again differ from person to person. It will be more or less kind of condition. However, everyone can have a thought process with some focus. So, even a thought process has a *dhyāna*. The word is *dhyāna* for that. So therefore, lets try to understand several connotations of *dhyāna*. It's a very liberal concept, idea, notion.

10:00

Then perhaps I made a mention that Patañjali has mentioned *dhyāna* in three places. It is because it has three different connotations:

- 1) For the disturbed mind to be normalized.
- 2) For normal minds to be sublimated.
- 3) For the mind of *yogis* to proceed to *samādhi*.⁴

1) For the disturbed mind to be normalized *dhyānaheyāstadvṛttayaḥ* [PYS II.11]

When the mind is below normal, we are not in our normal elements because our mind is disturbed, there is worry, anxiety, some fear, or sometimes we are petrified, so it is totally disturbed mind. Mind is in disarray. Now when the mind is in such a condition, you cannot stipulate someone to go for meditation. However, you are advised to go for *dhyāna* and it is really fruitful. Because the connotation for *dhyāna* changes there.

One of the many connotations for *dhyāna* is when you are able to lift your mind from sub-stacy; subnormal level - mind disorganized, mind is disarray mind vexed, mind

It is the faculty of discrimination between right and wrong; it is deliberation about cause and effect, and the final analysis.

This Sanskrit word, *Vichāra*, does not have a corresponding word in English.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vichara>

- 4 p. 173-74 Prashant Iyengar, *LIGHT ON VYASA BHASYA (On Patanjali Yog sutras)*, Publisher: Ramamani Memorial Yoga Institute 1107 B/1, Model Colony, Pune 411016 India

tormented to an unusual proportion -. When you try to steady that mind, whatever means you apply to steady that mind, revive the mind to normal plane, to stacy, all that effort is *dhyāna*.

You don't have to be sitting quiet, sitting steady, closing the eyes; now such technical process will not work when you are absolutely devastated, petrified or enormous tumult, turbulence of anxiety, worry, tension, stress. However, *dhyāna* will come. So *dhyāna* can even be a thought. Sometimes, the thought will pacify your mind, to whatever extent. It is not that it should be totally revived, 100% revived, 100% steadied. So when the vexed mind, finds a solution by a thought process, by sometimes talking to someone; talking to someone also eases your mind, so actually, you are talking to a person but that person has such a radiation or has such a calibre or is so related to you, that you are comforted to whatever extent and the turbulence of the mind is set aside, mitigated, neutralized or sometimes even sufficient recovery from disturbed state of mind. *Dhyāna* can be even a thought.

Dhyāna can be an audition, you hear to someone, you hear someone, somebody talking to you. Merely voice of that person comforts you because you have such an affiliation with that person that mere voice of that person will comfort you. The voice plus subject matter will comfort you, the voice plus subject matter and communication, conversation will comfort you. That is also *dhyāna*. That is not meditation. That is *dhyāna*. So that is one meaning of *dhyāna* where the mind is lifted form a substacy, subnormal state, unusual state to be revived towards normalcy even partially.

Sometimes just a memory of someone, something will comfort you. That is also *dhyāna*, because it is lifting your mind from the mire where it has got stuck. That is also meaning of *dhyāna*. It can be a wise man's thought; it can be a voice of a person with which you have a special bondage, affiliation, relationship. So merely the voice of that person will lift you, that also is *dhyāna*. You did not meditate. There was no meditating, there was no meditation, there was no meditativity. Yet you were comforted. So Patañjali mentions this in his second chapter.

15:50

Even he says after describing the *kleśas* – *avidyā, asmitā, rāga, dveṣa, abhiniveśa* – by describing the 5 *kleśas*.

Kleśas may not torment us – that we will see when we really deal with the *kleśas* – but the *kleśa vṛttis*⁵ can torment us. *Kleśa vṛttis* are *śaḍripus*. Uncontrollable passion, lust, anger. When there is an unwieldy kind of passion, lust craze, delirium, infatuation, anger. When there is that kind of unwieldy – we are vexed, we are tormented. It is almost that we have a volcano within and we are parched by that. Those are all *kleśa vṛttis* – *kāma*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, *mātsarya*.

Kāma means desire, passion, lust.

Krodha is anger, exasperation, furiousness.

Lobha is greed, avarice.

Moha is infatuation, delusion.

Mada is pride, self-conceit.

Mātsarya is jealousy, malice.

So that disturbs our own mind, where it goes out of proportion. We ourselves will be burnt by that. We become explosive. So, when these *kleśa vṛttis* are tormenting us, harassing us, parching us – the measure that we take, any measure that we take – being Iyengar students, maybe you will go to *Viparīta Karaṇi*, maybe we will go to half *Halāsana*, maybe we will go to *Jānu Śīrṣāsana*, maybe we will go to hang on the rope – any measure that you apply which mitigates it, manages it, lessens it, that is fit to be called *dhyāna*.

So that is the one *dhyāna* that he has mentioned:

*dhyānaheyah tadvṛttayah*⁶.

5 *Vṛtti* is another complex word. It is derived from the *Sanskṛt* root *vṛt* meaning to rotate, to revolve, to turn, to roll. If we watch our thoughts carefully, these thoughts jump like monkeys. As monkeys jump from one branch to another or from tree to tree, our thoughts jump like monkeys without rhyme or realm. Our thoughts keep on rotating around like in a game of musical chairs. *Vṛtti* also means the mode of life according to our likings or mode of conduct or character. It also stands for the course of action. *Citta* and its *vṛtti* act accordingly. Therefore *vṛtti* have to be thought of in all perspectives. ... *Vṛtti* also means the mode of life according to our liking or mode of conduct or character. It also stands for the course of action.

Yogācārya B.K.S. Iyengar *Aṣṭādaśa Yogamālā*, Allied Publishers Private Ltd, Vol. 8, p. 243-244.

6 II.11 *dhyānaheyah tadvṛttayah*



When there is a battle of *vṛttis* within us – *kleśa vṛttis* – when they are engaged in a battle, fierce battle, whatever measures we take to pacify them, if they are justifiable measures, advocated by yoga, advocated by spirituality, then it is *dhyāna*.

Otherwise, you can have a cavil, that those who are addicted people they will go for consumptions, of liquor consumptions and they will say “I pacified my mind by that.” It is not justifiable means; it is not advocated in yoga.

So, any measure which is advocated by *dharma*, by *adhyātma*, by yoga, by spirituality – when you take recourse to such measures – it is also called *dhyāna*. However, there will be not even an iota of meditation, meditativity – yet it will be *dhyāna*.

In our tradition, our parents, our ancestors told us that whenever we are petrified – suppose, you are taking a walk and you happen to be by the side of a burial ground or a crematorium – it is not a comfortable condition for mind to be passing by a burial ground or cremation ground. So, particularly when they are children, they will be petrified. Even the adults will be petrified. So, we were advised to take the name of the greatest saviour: Rāma⁷ Rāma Rāma Rāma Rāma Rāma Rāma. So, there are certain *japas* which would be given. These were not any formal kind of *japas*, do not just be uttering – Rāma Rāma Rāma Rāma Rāma Rāma Rāma, Ramakrishna⁸ Hari⁹, Ramakrishna Hari, Ramakrishna Hari, Ramakrishna Hari, Ramakrishna Hari, Achyuthaanantha Govinda¹⁰,

The fluctuations of consciousness created by gross and subtle afflictions are to be silenced through meditation. B.K.S. Iyengar, *Light on the Yogasūtra of Patañjali*, HarperCollins Publishers (1993).

- 7 Rāma is a major deity in Hinduism. He is the seventh and one of the most popular avatars of Vishnu. In Rama-centric traditions of Hinduism, he is considered the Supreme Being.
- 8 Ramakrishna Paramahansa was an Indian Hindu mystic and religious leader, who lived in 19th-century Bengal. Ramakrishna approached his religious life through the path of devotion to the Goddess Kali, and by observance of various elements from Tantra, Vaishnav Bhakti, and Advaita Vedanta, as well as dalliances with Christianity and Islam. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramakrishna>
- 9 Hari (Sanskrit: हरि, IAST: Hari) means He who attracts all things to Himself. It refers to the one who removes darkness and illusion, God who removes all obstacles to spiritual progress. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hari>
- 10 Achyutha, Anantha and Govinda’ are names of Lord Vishnu. ‘Achyutha’ means the one who is immovable/imperishable. It also means one who does not let go of his devotees.

‘Anantha’ means one without end. ‘Antha’ is end. Thus Vedanta is that which is at the end of Vedas, which are the Upanishads. The prefix ‘An’ indicates ‘without’, thus Anantha is the one without an end. Similarly ‘Aadhi’ is beginning. ‘Anaadhi’ is without beginning
‘Govinda’ means ‘protector of cows’ (‘go’ is cow; goshala is cow shed), thus meaning Lord Krishna

Achyuthaanantha Govinda, Achyuthaanantha Govinda, Achyuthaanantha Govinda, Hanuman, Maruti or any personal deity, which gives solace to mind. So very *japa* of that *nāma* is *dhyāna*. However, you are not in composure, you are not sitting steady, straight. The description that comes for a class of meditation which comes in *Bhāgavadgītā*:

*samaṃ kāyaśirogrīvaṃ dhārayannacalaṃ sthiraḥ
sampsreksya nāsikāgraṃ svaṃ diśāścānavalokayan*¹¹

Sit straight, steady, firm, spine, neck, head straight. Close your eyes and vision towards your tip of the nose and see that all digressions are shunned. The mind is not going helter-skelter. That is one kind of *dhyāna* that is mentioned. That kind of *dhyāna* cannot be coming when you are passing by a cremation ground, when you are petrified, when you are angry, when you are disturbed, when you are vexed, when you are devastated in the mind – you cannot go for sitting straight etc. That is also *dhyāna*.

22:23

Now, since today this mediation has become fashionable. *Dhyāna* in the form of meditation has become fashionable. Why is meditation prescribed in our times? Meditation is prescribed in our times as stress management. The medicos are also advocating that one should go for life-style changes and one must also go for yoga and meditation. So, meditation means stress management. Now we think, that is why the modern man will tend to develop an idea that meditation is something when you are stressed you must be doing it. *Dhyāna* is something, when you are stressed, you must be going for *dhyāna*. Because in modern world, *dhyāna* is only prescribed for those having hypertension, worry, anxiety, vexed by the worldly conditions and that is why we are going for meditation.

The sages of the lore did not explore meditation because they were vexed and tormented and harassed or stressed. Yet meditation came in there. They actually thought of meditation and *dhyāna* – *dhyāna* as the means for *jñāna*. And today *dhyāna* has come as a means to destress oneself. So, the modern man would construe that

11 Let him firmly hold his body, head and neck erect and still, gazing at the tip of his nose, without looking around.

Samaṃ = straight; kāya = body; śiraḥ = head; grīvaṃ = neck; dhārayan = holding; acalaṃ = unmoving; sthiraḥ = still; sampreksya = looking; nāsikā = of the nose; agraṃ = at the tip; svaṃ = own; diśaḥ = on all sides; ca = also; anavalokayān = not looking.

<https://shlokam.org/bhagavad-gita/6-13>

dhyāna is something for stress management measure. And I am afraid, that in time to come that would be the limited meaning to *dhyāna* and meditation. Anyway...

The point is that *dhyāna* concept, notion, idea, process was devised by the sages of the lore. They considered the whole idea where *dhyāna* is required. The point is to lift the mind from sub-normal state to normal state, certain measures, acceptable measures would be qualified to be called as *dhyāna* although you don't sit and close your eyes necessarily. It could be a thought process.

25:30

2) For normal minds to be sublimated

Another meaning of *dhyāna* is when the mind is in a normal plane – to take to a higher rung, to a higher rung, so lifting the mind from normal plane to higher plane is also another kind of *dhyāna* which comes in the *samāpatti*¹² – preceding *samāpatti* topic called *citta parikrama*¹³ in the first chapter.

There is *dhyāna* which comes in the aphorism

*yathābhīmata dhyānadvā*¹⁴. [PYS I.39]

So, when the mind is say, normal, you want to take it to a higher plane; take recourse to a noble thought-process. The mind will be etherealised. A divine thought process, a noble thought process, philosophised thought-process, mind will be lifted from a normal level to a higher rung. Again it could be a thought, it could be a memory, it

12 I.41 *kṣīnavṛtteḥ abhijātasya iva mañeḥ grahītr grahaṇa grāhyeṣu tatstha tadañjanatā samāpattiḥ* ||

The yogi realizes that the knower, the instrument of knowing and the known are one, himself, the seer. Like a pure transparent jewel, he reflects an unsullied purity.

Samāpatti = transformation, assuming the original form, consummation, completion, conclusion. B.K.S. Iyengar, *Light on the Yogasūtra of Patañjali*, HarperCollins Publishers (1993).

13 Now comes the topic of instruction on overcoming this rambling mind. It is the topic of *citta parikrama*. The author says to make the mind serene, quiet and steady, practice the following ...

maitrī karuṇā muditopekṣāṇām sukha duḥkha puṇyāpuṇya viṣayāṇām bhāvanāthaścitta prasādanam (33) ||

To evolve the potentials of mind for steadfastness in abhyasa (effort to steady the mind) and vairagya (for dispassion), one must practice the following for this interactive mind. The mind evolves placidity and digression is thwarted. The sutra says: "By cultivating habits of friendliness, compassion, gladness or complacency and indifference towards happiness, misery, virtues and vices (respectively), the mind becomes placid, pure and gracious; thus the digressive nature is curbed. p. 96 Prashant Iyengar, *LIGHT ON VYASA BHASYA (On Patanjali Yog sutras)*, Publisher: Ramamani Memorial Yoga Institute 1107 B/1, Model Colony, Pune 411016 India

14 "Or by meditating according to one's predilection." p. 113 *ibid*.

could be even perception, it could be perception and cognition. Like when you go to a holiday resort. Wonderful scenery around – mountain ranges, lakes and rivers, trees and forests, and woods, and whatever, not that your mind is vexed – your mind is normal perhaps little delighted, happy mind, but when you see a sublime scenery – it would take your mind to a higher rung. It will sublimate the mind. Mind is normal; from normal it will become more ethereal, more sublime by sublime scenery. By listening to music, sonorous music, it would be taken a rung above. Mind will become tender, sublime, mind will become etherealized – so you go a rung higher. It could be some perception, cognition, memory, thought, interaction with a person again. If you are interactive with a very knowledgeable, noble, revered person to you. If you are able to have interaction with a revered person naturally your mind is elated, mind is etherealized. So, any such acceptable measures applied which will take the mind to a higher rung is called *dhyāna*. You may not be meditating, there is no meditation, there is no meditativity, there is no meditation – yet there will be *dhyāna*. That is another meaning of *dhyāna*.

28:40

Now as I said, *dhyāna* really does not need any qualification as such. Not only it doesn't need qualification, actually *dhyāna* is imperative in one form. So, there is a form of *dhyāna* which is imperative. It does not really look for your qualification, deservation etc. etc.. That is why it is something mandatory if the life is on a spiritual plane. It is a must. There is something within us which needs a form of *dhyāna*. And therefore, it's sans all qualifications and there is also no assessment of success and failure. Because many of us have an assessment of our meditation and more often we say, "My meditation failed." If you are honestly your own auditor, then you will say that more often your meditation backfires or your meditation fails even. And therefore, we have distress in our mind. If our meditation has failed, we never come up spiritedly, we are depressed. There is a despair. Why? Because we have failed. Here, for that kind of *dhyāna* where no qualification is at all in consideration, then that is a kind of *dhyāna* where again success or failure is not counted.

So, there is a kind of *dhyāna* which becomes imperative for a human being to be a good human being, you must have that kind of *dhyāna*. It is a must. Like when you are hungry and thirsty – you cannot say, I will refrain from water and food. Because you know that it is badly needed. When it is badly needed, you quench your thirst and hunger. You don't look for qualification, many times you don't even look for the quality

o f the food, taste of the food if you are damn hungry, dead hungry, you will try to gobble that comes our way. We don't consider likes and dislikes. Otherwise, you have tantrums I don't like this, I like that. I must have that, I don't want this etc. etc. Those who have tantrums in food, know very well that they are not actually hungry. When you are hungry, you will gobble whatever that comes our way. You will see that it is edible and you will eat it. You will not entertain likes and dislikes, favours and disfavours etc. There is a form of *dhyāna* which is a must. Why is it a must? Let's try to consider that.

Therefore, we have to have little insight into our embodiment. You go for a whole-body scan, all kinds of insights – mechanical insights by all kinds of MRIs and whatever, will they trace everything that is in you? Will they know your mind? Why it is the way it is? No scan report will tell you why your mind is as it is. Even if you go for encephological studies and brain scans and insights, it will not tell you why your mind is how it is. It is not traced. So, there are so many things that are not traced by the insights of radiology and chemical processes of tests and lab tests and pathological tests. So many things are beyond the grasp.

There is in our embodiment something which needs *dhyāna*. So, let us try to understand what is that in our embodiment for which we must go for *dhyāna* – a type of *dhyāna*, a mode of *dhyāna*. Again, I say you don't need to qualify. You don't need to qualify. You don't need to develop calibre. It is an open architecture, it is such a liberal concept; it is a liberal idea that *dhyāna* is a must for human being to be a good human being. Let us try to consider that kind of *dhyāna*. But that is for the next session. Enough for this session. Thank you very much

Namaskar.

The transcription, notes and graphic composition work, was performed out of love and respect thanks to a group of volunteers, students of Iyengar Yoga, from various countries of the world.

ooo ooo ooo