

Lesson 12: Online education on Yoga by Sri Prashant S. Iyengar

Namaskar

Welcome to new session.

In the last session, we just touched upon – it was an enunciation to this session actually. I referred to Dhyana. So, let us have a more formal understanding about Dhyana. Not just information but understanding.

Basically, I have been telling you that meditation is not Dhyana and Dhyana is not meditation. Meditation term does not come in yoga sutras or science of yoga. The word has been Dhyana. And Dhyana must be retained as Dhyana and considered as a technical term and one should not venture into translating it into a term meditation. And of course, we saw the process of meditation. The chemical analysis would show that there is no difference in the water that you have picked up in a vessel and water from the ocean. There is no differences and their chemical properties would be one and the same. However, there would be 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, 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, Dhyana is like ocean. Meditation is one of the phenomena in the ocean. One of the many many many phenomena in the ocean. Therefore, we should never equate meditation with Dhyana. It is a technical term which should be retained as Dhyana. And finally, I will save meditation is just a part of it. As much as a 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 Dhyana and meditation.

In the formal understanding of the subject, we should not conveniently use the term meditation for Dhyana. We have seen that meditation needs just as I said, meditation needs calibre, qualification, reservations. That is not the case of Dhyana. Dhyana is an open architecture. The last time I gave you an example, Dhyana comes to describe the personal deity. I gave the example of ramaraksha. I told you about Vishnusahasranama, where you get something as Dhyana. When you open the stavana of any personal deity, you will invariably get Dhyana. And in the two verses that we chant for Patanjali, I told you the second verse is Dhyana shloka because it describes Patanjali on which we are supposed to have Dhyana or what you call meditation on that figure which is described. So there also the word Dhyana comes. In vernacular, Dhyana also comes for advertence. Like in English, we get this expression, "please listen carefully." "Listen attentively, advertently." "Attention please" is the expression in English and many other languages. Whereas in vernacular, the word Dhyana comes there. "Dhyana se suno." Means carefully listen. Intently listen. Diligently listen. Advertently listen. So Dhyana comes there as well. Do we lack qualification to listen to something advertently? More or less, all of us are qualified. Not that all are equally qualified. 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 Dhyana. Like I said as the example in Hindi, "Dhyana se suno." In English we never say, "Meditatively hear." Because then that is not within the qualification everyone - to go to meditation and then listen. But Dhyana 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, advertently, diligently. Dhyana purvak vichara. It is just that you need an involvement. You must shun all your digressions. You must have focus. That is also Dhyana. 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 Dhyana is not that. Therefore, I am repetitively telling you that we should not venture to use the English word for Dhyana. Dhyana has several connotations. It is liberal, it has an open architecture. So, one meaning we saw, you are hearing something advertently, intently, diligently, shunning all digressions. Even a though process like that to whatever extent possible. When you are having a though process with some focus then that will again differ from person to person. It will more or less kind of condition. However, everyone can have a thought process with some focus. So,

even a thought process can have Dhyana. The word is Dhyana for that. So therefore, let's try to understand several connotations of Dhyana. It's a very liberal concept, idea, notion.

Then perhaps I made a mention that Patanjali has mentioned that Dhyana in three places. It is because it has three different connotations. When the mind is below normal; worry 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 a 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 Dhyana and it is really fruitful. Because the connotation for Dhyana changes there. One of the many connotations for Dhyana is when you are able to lift your mind from sub-stacy; subnormal level. Mind disorganised, mind is disarray, mind vexed, mind 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 Dhyana.

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. However, Dhyana will come. Dhyana 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, talking to a person but that person has such a radiation or has such a calibre or is so related to you, so you are comforted to whatever extent and the turbulence of the mind is set aside, mitigated, neutralised or sometimes even sufficient recovery from disturbed state of mind. Dhyana can be even a thought. Dhyana 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 affiliation with that person that mere voice of that person will comfort you. The voice plus subject matter will comfort you, the voice subject matter and communication, conversation will comfort you. That is also Dhyana. That is not meditation. That is Dhyana. So that is one meaning of Dhyana where the mind is lifted from a sub-stacy, subnormal state, unusual state to be revived towards normalcy even partially. Sometimes even a memory of someone, something will comfort you. That is also Dhyana. Because that is also lifting your mind from

mire where it has got stuck. That is also meaning of Dhyana. It can be a wise man's thought; it can be a voice of a person with whom you have a special bondage, affiliation, relationship. So merely the voice of that person will life you, that is also Dhyana. You did not meditate. There was no meditating, there was no meditation, there was no meditativity. Yet you were comforted. So Patanjali mentions this in his second chapter.

Even he says after describing the kleshas, avidya, asmita, raga, dvesha, abhinivesha – by describing the 5 kleshas. He says that the klesha vrttis, kleshas, may not torment us. That we will see when we really deal with the kleshas. But the klesha vrttis can torment us. Klesha vrttis are shadripius. Uncontrollable passion, lust unwieldy. When it is an unwieldy kind of passion, lust craze, delirium, infatuation, anger, the 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 klesha vrttis – kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, matsar – matsarya, Kama is passion, desire, lust. Krodha – anger, exasperation, furiousness, lobha-greed, avarice, moha – infatuation, mada – pride, self-conceit and jealousy – matsa, matsarya – 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 klesha vrittis are tormenting us, harassing us, parching us – the measure that we take, any measure that we take, being Iyengar students, maybe you go to Viparita Karani, maybe we will go to half Halasana, maybe we will go to Janu Sirsasana, 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 Dhyana.

So that is the one Dhyana that he has mentioned: *dhyanaheyah tadvrttayah II.11*

When there is a battle of vrttis within us, klesha vrttis, 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 Dhyana. Otherwise, you can have cavil that those who are addicted people they will go for consumptions, liquor consumptions and say, "I pacified my mind by that." It is not justifiable means; it is not advocated in yoga. So, any measure that is advocated by dharma, by adhyatma, by yoga by spirituality – when you take recourse to such measures – it is also called Dhyana. However, there will be not even an iota of meditation, meditativity – yet it will be Dhyana. In our tradition, our parents, our ancestors, told us that whenever we are petrified, suppose, you are taking a walk and you happen to 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 Rama rama rama rama rama rama rama. So, there are various japas which would be given. These were not any formal kind of japas – ram, ram, ram, ram, ram, ram, ram, Ramakrishna Hari, Ramakrishna Hari, Ramakrishna Hari, Ramakrishna Hari, Achyutananda Govinda, Achyutananda Govinda, Achyutananda Govinda, Achyutananda Govinda, Hanuman, Maruti or any personal deity, which gives solace to mind. Or very japa of that naama is Dhyana. However, you are not in composure, you are not sitting steady, straight, the description that comes for a class of meditation which comes in Bhagvad Gita, “*samam kaya-siro-grivam, dharayann acalam sthirah sampreksya nasikagram svam, disas canavalokayan, [B.G 6:13-14]*

Sit straight, steady, firm, 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 Dhyana that is mentioned. That kind of Dhyana 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 Dhyana.

Now, since today this mediation has become fashionable. Dhyana 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. Dhyana is something, when you are stressed, you must be going for Dhyana. Because in modern world, Dhyana is only prescribed for those having hypertension, worry, anxiety, vexed by the worldly condition 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 Dhyana – Dhyana as the means for jnana. And today Dhyana has come as a means to destress oneself. So, the modern man would construe that Dhyana is something for stress

management measure. And I am afraid, that in time to come that would be the limited meaning to Dhyana and meditation. Anyway..

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

Another meaning of Dhyana 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 place to higher plane is also another kind of Dhyana which comes in the samapatti – preceding samapatti topic called citta parikrama in the first chapter. There is Dhyana which comes in the aphorism – *yathaabhimatadhyanatva*. [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 higher rung. It could be a thought, it could be a memory, it could be even perception, it could be perception and cognition. When like you go to a holiday resort. Wonderful scenery around – mountain ranges, lakes and rivers, trees and forests, and woods.. 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 from sublime scenery. By listening to music, sonorous music, it would be taken a rung above. Mind will become tender, sublime, mind will become etherealised – 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 knowledgeable, noble, revered person to you. If you are able to have interaction with a revered person naturally your mind is elated, mind is etherealised. So, any such acceptable measures applied which will take the mind to a higher rung is called Dhyana. You may not be meditating, there is no meditation, there is no meditativity, there is no meditation – yet there will be Dhyana. That is another meaning of Dhyana.

Now as I said, Dhyana really does not need any qualification as such. Not only it doesn't need qualification, actually Dhyana is imperative in one form. So, there is a form of Dhyana which is imperative. It does not really look for your qualification, deservation 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 Dhyana. And therefore, its 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 your meditation backfires or more often 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 Dhyana where no qualification is at all in consideration, then that is a kind of Dhyana where again success or failure I not counted. So, there is a kind of Dhyana which becomes imperative for a human being to be a good being, you must have that kind of Dhyana. 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 of 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 Dhyana 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 encephologic 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 Dhyana. So, let us try to understand what is that in our embodiment for which we must go for Dhyana – a type of Dhyana, a mode of Dhyana. Again, I say you don't need to qualify. You don't need to qualify. You don't need to develop calibre. It is a liberal concept; it is a liberal idea that Dhyana is a must for human being to be a good human being. Let us try to consider that kind of Dhyana. But that is for the next session. Enough for this session.

Thank you very much

Namaskar.