

Online Education by Sri Prashant Iyengar – Lesson 5

April 25, 2020-04-25
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Namaskar, all of you.

Today we are in the 5th session. Today I want to add something to, something to *yamas* and *niyamas*, which we discussed last time. The moral-ethical principles come to work while we are in social reference, and therefore, as I said, yoga is not having any social reference, you are totally individualized, personalised, inwardly. Then where is the field for practicing morality-ethicality is something on the plane of behaviour. That's a face value of a person, when you speak to, refer to morality, ethicality that is a face value of a person, we really don't need face value while we are in spiritual practices, *adhyatmik* practices, yogic practices. Then, the other point is, usually we all claim that, we are morally, ethically strong, compared to someone else, so we have this relativity concept in morality – ethicality with regards to others, we are critical, and we tend to assess them in their morality and ethicality, while we deem ourselves that we are morally, ethically strong.

The morality and ethicality aspects, one more thing to understand here is that if you are not committing *himsa*, that doesn't mean that, you are in *ahimsa*. If you are not indulging in *asatya*, it doesn't mean that you are in *satya*, like if somebody is not a bad person, it doesn't mean he is a good person, or if somebody is not a good person, it doesn't mean that he is a bad person. A good person must be a good person. Good person will be a good person and a bad person will be a bad person. Not being bad is not being good. Not being good is not being bad. So not being unethical, there is no ground to claim that you are ethical. Not being immoral, there is no ground for you to claim that you are moral, that you are in morality. Morality is morality. Ethicality is ethicality. Unethicality is unethicality. Not being unethicality doesn't mean that you are ethical. Not being immoral, it doesn't mean that you are moral. Like somebody not ugly doesn't mean that the person is handsome or beautiful. Somebody not beautiful doesn't mean the person is ugly. So with respect to these, moral ethical principles we'll have to understand this one more perspective there, dimension there. Now, if we are, if we claim that we are practicing *ahimsa*, *satya*, *asteya*, somebody might be a good person and therefore he says he is in *ahimsa*, he is in *satya*, he doesn't take recourse to *asatya*, doesn't take recourse to *himsa*, doesn't take recourse to antagonizers. But one more point to reinforce the earlier statement that Patanjali is not dealing with

moral-ethical principles but ethico-religious principles. Why is it? Suppose we are practicing *ahimsa*, if we think we are in *ahimsa*, and we don't indulge in *himsa*, we are not definitely in a vow of *ahimsa*. If somebody is a good person, the person has not taken a vow to be good, the person is merely good. If the person is a noble person, the person is noble because he is noble, its not that the person has taken vow of nobility whereas Patanjali immediately embarks upon the topic of *vratas* or vows, either atomic vows or great vows, that is why there is *dharma* in his 5 principles or 10 principles *yamas* and *niyamas*. There is something like vows. It is not just practicing *satya*, practicing *ahimsa*, practicing *brahmacharya*, practicing *asteya*, practicing *shaucha*, practicing *santosha*, *tapa*, etc. It's not just practice. If you are practicing that is not sufficient, and that is not what Patanjali has mentioned. He expects it that to be a *vrata*. *Vrata* means vow. That is how it is rendered into English, which doesn't have proper connotation, filtering down to language of English.

Vrata is a unique concept in the *sanatana dharma*. *Vratas* have a greater prowess and power. *Vrata* has a cultural ambience, cultural sublimity where by one is able to be in a *vrata*. Because *vratas* are *dharmic* practices. So, why it is *aacharniti dharma*? Because Patanjali immediately embarks upon *vrata*, and *vrata* only comes in *dharma*. *Vrata* doesn't come in morality ethicality. The moral people, the ethical people, are not necessarily in *vrata*. They need to take to make it a *vrata*. Those observances must be coming under the framework of *vrata*. That is what is expected, so that's why Patanjali mentions *vratas* immediately in the topic of *yama*, *niyamas*; either is *anu-vrata* or *maha-vrata*. We should be going by *anu-vrata*, not try to venture into *maha-vrata*. We must be taking atomic vows, and those can be certainly practiced. Atomic vows can be practiced. Great vows cannot be practiced. So that's why he has suggested vows in the topic of *yama-s* and *niyam-as*. Therefore there is some *dharma* aspect, *dharmic* aspect. Because outside *dharma* we don't have to take any *vratas*. Again let me tell you *vrata* doesn't have an English word, there are only vows. Vows are taken out of resoluteness; *vrata* is taken out of some *dharmic* practices. That is why these are *aacharniti dharma* practices aspects. That's why they are not moral ethical practices.

So even in the II.28th sutra of *ashtanga yoga* he says *yogangaanushthanat, anushthanam!*

Anushthanam is again a word that cannot be rendered into English; many of them have rendered it as a reverential practice. That doesn't carry the connotation properly. *Anushthanam* comes only in *karma*. There is *karma anushtha*, there is *Jnana anushtha*, there is *mantra anushtha*, there is *anushta*. Today we are not aware of

yoga *anushta*. We are aware only of yoga practices. We think this is something to be practiced. And we don't give any framework of *anushta* whereas Patanjali in his text speaks of *anushtanam*, when it comes to *astanga* yoga.

It doesn't say *yogangapraectisat*, it doesn't say *yogangaanushtanam*.

So these are all earlier steps we have to take before going for *anushtanam*, we have to go to other preparatories, other stages, such as practices, *sadhana* discipline, etc., etc. So *yama niyamas* are coming in *anushtanam*, therefore there is *dharma*. *Anushtanam* is a term, which is only in *dharma, karma, Jnana, mantra* and yoga.

So that is another kind of point, which I am putting forward for you to understand that these are not moral ethical principles.

Now, going to the next topic. Before going to the next topic I was posed a question, and that is a very important question, vital question, and I want to deal with it. Because today people are fascinated to be doing yoga and meditation. Meditation has become a fashion, so much so that even the medicos are prescribing meditation for certain problems: coronary management, they say, they are going to get some meditation done, stress management, they speak of meditation, so people are trying to go for meditation, everyone wants to go for meditation. The strange thing is that everyone wants to get meditation, everyone wants to try and get meditation, no one wants to know what is meditation. This is a very strange scenario. When you have such an intent to go for meditation, why is it that one is not trying to understand what is meditation? The question put to me was, that Guruji often said that his yoga is dynamic meditation.

Nobody questioned how yoga is meditation, the *asanas* or Iyengar yoga that is being practiced, how it can be a dynamic meditation? Because usually meditation means one imagines sitting, sitting quiet, relaxed, and then closing the eyes and doing something as meditation. So everyone wants to make an attempt for meditation. But it's important that we must know what is meditation. Meditation is a psychological, psychomental act.

At the outset let me tell you, I am not talking about *dhyana*. Meditation is not *dhyana*, *dhyana* is a wider concept, meditation is a component of it, meditation is a part of it, meditation is a facet of it, we should not equate meditation with *dhyana*. *Dhyana* has a wider scope. Anyway people are not interested today in *dhyana*, they are all interested in meditation particularly, the western world, which has come into the fold of yoga. *Dhyana* is not a familiar term for them and they have been told that *dhyana* is

meditation, and therefore they are going for meditation, they want to go for meditation. Let me try to give a little explanation about what meditation is. Meditation is a psychological, psycho-mental act. It is of the brain, it is in the brain, it is from the brain, it is by the brain, it is of the brain. That is why it is a psychological, psycho-mental process. Now that means meditation will always have a thought. You can't be having no thought and then go for meditation. Absolute thoughtlessness will not be meditation; it is something else, which Patanjali speaks about *cittavritti-nirodha*. In case the mind is restrained, *citta* is restrained. It's a different state. Meditation is however not bereft of a thought. Now, usually we worldly people only know about a thought and then we are in thinking. We think, and then there is a thought. Keep thinking, we have a thought. We keep on thinking, we have a thought, we have thoughts. Thoughts come and go, thoughts is inward, outward movements. Thoughts arrive, thoughts depart. So, there is traffic of thoughts going on. So, while the thoughts are on, even in our mundane state, worldly state, awake full state, the thoughts are on. Then meditation is something different. The point is that there is always a thought, and then we keep thinking.

Now meditation can take place, which is a thought process, which is a thinking process. It can take place in only particular realms. Any thought matter, any thought content, doesn't qualify to go for meditative state. Every thought will not culminate in a meditative state.

There are only few thoughts, sublime thoughts, transcendent thoughts; we require suitable thought matter for going to a meditative state.

So meditativity depends upon the thought. How transcendent the thought is? How noble a thought is? How virtuous a thought is? Any thought cannot land in meditativity.

So when there is a thought, there's invariably thinking. When there is thinking, there is a thinker. So there is a triad, which constitutes the process of our thought.

It may be non-meditative thought or it may be meditative thought. There will be invariably a thinker, and there will be thinking, and there will be a thought.

Now we worldly people are merely used to thinking around the thought. We have a thought and we go on thinking, we go on thinking, we go on thinking.

So there is always thinking about a thought. This will never land us in a meditative state.

What is meditation then? When there is this tripartite constitution that there is a thinker, there is thinking and there is a thought.

Understand these, the inflections of the word. It is one word having three inflections. Thinker, thinking and a thought.

Now we are only used to having a thinking process on a thought. We never have a thinking process on thinking. Now it is essential that there is a thinking process about very thinking, there is a thinking process about very thinker.

So we'll have to find a thought, not only in a thought, but we'll have to find a thought in thinking, we'll have to find a thought in thinker. So just, around the thought if we go on hovering, hovering, hovering with thinking, it will not be meditativity.

So we will have to get used to a process. Today the meditation has been suggested, any Tom, Dick and Harry suggests and we think we should embark upon meditation.

So, listen carefully to what I say now: So, there is a thinker, there is thinking, there is a thought. Don't just think about the thought. Don't just keep thinking about the thought. We must also investigate the very thought. What is this thought? Why is this thought needed? From where the thought has come? What is the subject matter of the thought? What is the realm of the thought? We must have such investigation about the thought. So thought must be thought about.

Then will be a thought about the thought, as to why did this thought come?

From where did it come? How did it come? What was the agency to which I got the thought? What is the purpose of the thought? Should I keep thinking about this thought? Is it worthwhile to be thinking on this thought?

So the thought must be under scrutiny. This is implied in meditativity, have a scrutiny of your thought. Is this thought of anything good to me?

Should I continue to be having this thought in my mind? Or should I do away with the thought? Is the thought harmful or is the thought helpful, nourishing, helping me to get involved.

So there should be a thought about thought, there should be a thought about a thought. There should be thinking about a very thought. Rather than just thinking, and having a thought in thinking, then let there be a thought, what is the thought content, thought

container, thought resource, thought source. Subject of thought subject matter of thought, purpose of thought, worth of thought, value of thought.

You will not like to be thinking on something that once you're convinced, that it's worthless to have a thought about. You will not engage yourself in a thought, when once you realize it is worthless to be thinking on it. Or it is disturbing me, or it is agonizing me, or annoying me. You will not continue to encourage the thought. So there should be scrutiny about the thought. So there should be thought about the thought, and not just thinking on the thought. Thought about the thought is the component of the meditativity.

Then thought about thinking: How am I thinking? Why am I thinking? What are the tools that we are using for thinking? Because behind your thinking when you are having your thinking, there is perception, there is cognition, there is sensation, there are memories, there are other inputs, there are experiences. So they will all be constituting the thinking process. If they are not there, then the thinking process will not be constituted.

So one needs to investigate about the very thinking? How the thinking is taking place? What is the data supporting my thinking? What is underlying my thinking? As I just now said, there will be perceptions, you will have perceptions, you will have cognitions, you will have sensations, you will have memories, you will have experiences. All these things constitute to the thinking process. So we must have a thought on thinking. Now that's a component of meditativity.

Why am I thinking? How am I thinking? How should I be thinking? How should I not be thinking? When should I be thinking? When should I not be thinking? Because a thought is a good thought. Thinking is a good process, but sometimes the place is not right, time is not right.

So we will have to have a scrutiny. Is it the right time to have thinking upon it?

Is it the right time to have thinking on a thought, particular thought? Is it the right time, space, situation scenario? Objectively, we will have to look at this:

Not just keep on thinking, keep on thinking, keep on thinking.

Is it right time to think about it? Think it might be worthwhile to be thinking about. But maybe the time, space, situation, may not be right. So we have to objectify this. Is it the right time, space, situation, scenario for me to be thinking on this thought? So there must be a thought about thinking. Then there should be a thought about thinker. What is the state of the thinker?

Am I in a proper state of mind to be having thoughtfulness or thinking process?

Am I vexed? Am I tormented? Am I angry? Do I have prejudices? There is no point in having thought process when we have prejudices about that particular thing. So we will have to also investigate the thinker. Is the thinker in right frame of mind to think about that thought, there and then? Is the thinker in proper state of mind? Is the thinker in proper profile? Is it a proper profile to be thoughtful? If it is a vexed condition, tormented condition, agonizing condition, or erupted condition with some malaise, prejudices, etc.

Then that is not the right time to be thinking. The thinker should not be thinking then. A thinker should start becoming a thinker at another point in time, knowing that I am not in the right state of mind. So meditativity primarily means having a thought about thinker, a thought about thinking, it is so important, and also some thought about the very thought rather than just thinking and thinking and thinking.

Because if you don't analyse the thoughts, some thoughts have a stress potential, tension potential, stress potential, anxiety potential, worry potential, tormentation potential. So these are the thoughts you want to wean away from such thoughts because they are vexing your mind. The thought must be analysed, thought must be scrutinized. Similarly, thinking should be scrutinized and thinker should be under scrutiny. So thinking about thinker is a meditative component. Thinking about the thinker, rather than thinking about the thought. Then thinking about the thinking is a meditative component, rather than usual worldly process of merely having thinking process and a thought object.

So you will realize that for meditativity, you will have to select a proper thought object or thought content. Any thought content cannot be leading you to meditativity.

So there must be filtration about the thought. The thought must be suitable. Then, the thinking process should be scrutinized. So that, that will be evolved, that will be set right, that will be tuned, fine tuned, and the thinker.

So in short, if I have to just give a definition of meditation, primarily this is the nature of thought on thinker, thought on thinking, at the second stage, and thought about the thought.

So evolvement will take place in the reverse manner.

Thought about the thought, thought about thinking, thought about thinker.

So that is a culminative phase, that is a reflective phase. The thinker should be known, the thinker should be objectified, thinker should be assessed, thinker should be investigated, thinker should be under scrutiny. And Yogic subject matter is the best subject matter, to be going for meditativity.

Now why Guruji called his process, his yoga, as dynamic meditation, let me clarify here: Iyengar Yoga is not dynamic meditation, Iyengar's yoga was dynamic meditation. So, we Iyengar students should not be complacent, thinking that we are doing Iyengar Yoga, and Iyengar Yoga is dynamic meditation. It was his yoga which was meditation, because yoga, yogasanas, are wonderful condition to enter into the academy of meditativity.

Where, there is a body set addressal, there is a breath set addressal, there is a mind set addressal. The subjective entity is set right; object the asanas are set right, instrumental entities are set right. So, in an asanic rendition, classically, there is a subjective entity, there is an objective entity, there is an instrumental entity. Sometimes the subjective entity comes from the 'am' will. This was happening to Guruji in his practices. He was not just trying to perfect his sirsasana, he was getting his subjective entity on the am will, on the operation table, and carved, sculpted, cultured the subjective entity. So, he would objectify the subjective entity that is called witnessivity, auto-witnessing, self-witnessivity.

So, in his yoga, he was having autowitnessivity, and therefore he would set right his subjective entity. Whereas we have mistaken the process and we just go on correcting our sirsasana, we go on correcting our sarvangasana, we go on correcting our trikonasana, but we don't try to get corrected ourselves in a subjective profile. Whereas that is the implication of an asana.

So Guruji would be doing that... that any asana, there would be thought process. Now this is an *Adhyatmic* thought process. Usually for us a thought-object or thinking-process there is some external element coming in. Whereas in yoga, there is no external element coming in. The doer, doing, done are all-integral one, oneself. So there is something called as *karmakriya*, something called as *Jñanakriya*, something called as *Dhyanakriya*... in yogasanas.

So Guruji would not just have his asana under scrutiny, but he would have his instrument under scrutiny.

What is a point doing a perfect Sirsasana for sight by hook or crook? So instrumentation should be proper. So that should be under scrutiny.

How am I doing? How the instruments are being used? Are they justifiably used? Are they properly used? You just want to do an asana perfectly.

We don't bother about the instruments of it, because we think asana is a posture, posture is a spectacular thing, and a spectacle; and we try to work on an asana as spectacle, we don't bother about what we do inside. We don't bother about the processes; we want to just perfect an asana.

Guruji would have thought process on instruments. Guruji would have thought process on subjective entity. Because in meditativity you get reflections. That is why, in higher faculty functions, the process is pensivity, reflectivity, meditativity. If there is no reflectivity and no reflection, you can't meditate so you, don't meditate on a thought; you meditate on a reflection of a thought. You meditate on reflectivity. If there is no reflectivity, you can't be meditating.

Pensivity should be there. So these are higher faculty functions. That is why I said at the out set that these are psychological, psychomental processes. Meditativity is out of pensivity, reflectivity, meditativity. But we have messed up in our understanding. We think first we must concentrate. The concentration gives to meditation, is what is our notion, idea, and that's why we have the triad of concentration, meditation, trance.

That is not right, that is faulty. Concentration will never give you meditativity, concentration is always on an object. Can you imagine concentration with no sensory object? You must have a sensory object to concentrate. With no sensory object, you can't concentrate. So concentration is psycho-sensory. That's why the education is important. To have proper crystallization. So concentration is psycho-sensory.

That will escalate the state, higher state, concentration and absorption. Concentration, involvement and then absorption. You can get absorbed in a sensory object, so we have wrongly brought in meditation as a link, because of mistaken translation of *Dharana*, *Dhyana*, *Samadhi*, as concentration, meditation, trance. *Dharana* is not

concentration. *Dhyana* is not in that sense, meditation. *Samadhi*, in that sense, is not trance.

So, they happen in psycho-mental realm, progressively and we have brought meditation as a link, which is faulty, which is a blunder.

Where does meditation come? It comes in higher faculty functions, pensivity, reflectivity, meditativity. So for meditativity, there must be reflectivity. So object must be reflection-worthy. If the object is not reflection-worthy, you can't go to meditativity. And this pensivity, reflectivity, meditativity, they are to be churned out by the process or thought process, which I just now told you. Thought, Thinking, Thinker. Identify them, classify them, recognise them. Then what is the churning here? The thought about a thought, thought about a thought, thought about thinking, thought about thinker. Then again thought about a thought, thought about thinker, thought about thinking. Then again thought about a thought, thought about thinking, thought about thinker. So this circular process, rotary process does the churning and the reflectivity is evolved, meditativity is evolved out of this churning.

Only point to be noted here, from the educative perspective, dimension that, meditativity doesn't come from concentration. You don't need concentration to be meditating. You need a good, noble object suitable object for thought to be woven around it.

Every object is not worthwhile to be going for meditativity. Then you must go for dissection of thinker, thinking, thought. If I may say so trisection, the trisection of thought, thinking and thinker, identify each one of them. Objectify each one of them, analyse each one of them, investigate each one of them, scrutinize each one of them and then cyclically go on doing it, it will land up in meditativity. So how Gurujī's yoga was a dynamic meditative process or meditation because he was dealing with his core to periphery, periphery to core aspects. All aspects of me and mine coming as objective entities, instrumental entities and subjective entities. And that is why there was thought about thinking, and there was thought about thinker. That's not even a meditative process. So Gurujī was not just perfecting asanas but he was trying to carve, sculpt, also address, set-right the instrumental entities and subjective entities. That is why there was meditativity in his asanas.

How will you embark upon this process in your practices?

In your practices, try to understand the syntax which I said last time: I am doing Trikonasan, Trikonasan is being done, Trikonasan is being done on me, Trikonasan is done by the breath and by the mind, Trikonasan is done for the breath and for the mind. I am doing Trikonasan and Trikonasan is done on me. So this classical process will bring on horizon, the meditativity in your process and will start understanding how an asana can be a meditative state.

See in asanas, we go for a state of mind. And a state of mind is always a thought pattern. You can't have a good state of mind with no thought pattern. Scheme of thoughts, arrangement of thought, content of thought, they must be there, behind the state of your mind. So in natural, organic yogic processes, a state of mind has always a thought pattern underlying it and there's a thought structure raised over it.

In only inorganic process you can have a state of mind, without a thought substrate.

Like if you swallow a psychedelic pill, psychedelic drug, you don't need a thought scheme, for you to have that psychedelic state.

The drug will do that. That is inorganic process. That is unnatural process. In yoga, you work on your state of mind, very naturally, very organically, very autogenically. So bear in mind, there is always a thought pattern, thought scheme, thought arrangement behind that state of mind.

Sirsasan is not a psychedelic pill or savasan is not a psychedelic pill, that you get that state sublime state. It is autogenically turned out, biochemically turned out, electrochemically turned out. So there is always the thought, the thought process, that's why in asanas, I have introduced the precept of activity process and thought process. Layman, common-man most of the practitioners, also, think yoga is the activity process and then go over board on activity process. They don't identify thought process. Bring in thought process. Bring it significantly. There will be basis for meditativity, meditativity doesn't get based on activity, meditativity gets based on thought. So let's try to improve on thought processes in asanas. Let us objectify the thought processes. Let us have scrutiny of the thought processes. Let us try to address the thought processes. Let's try to improve the thought processes we'll certainly be heading towards meditativity and the dynamic meditation of Iyengar system. I think that is enough for the day. Thank you very much for your patience.

Namaskar